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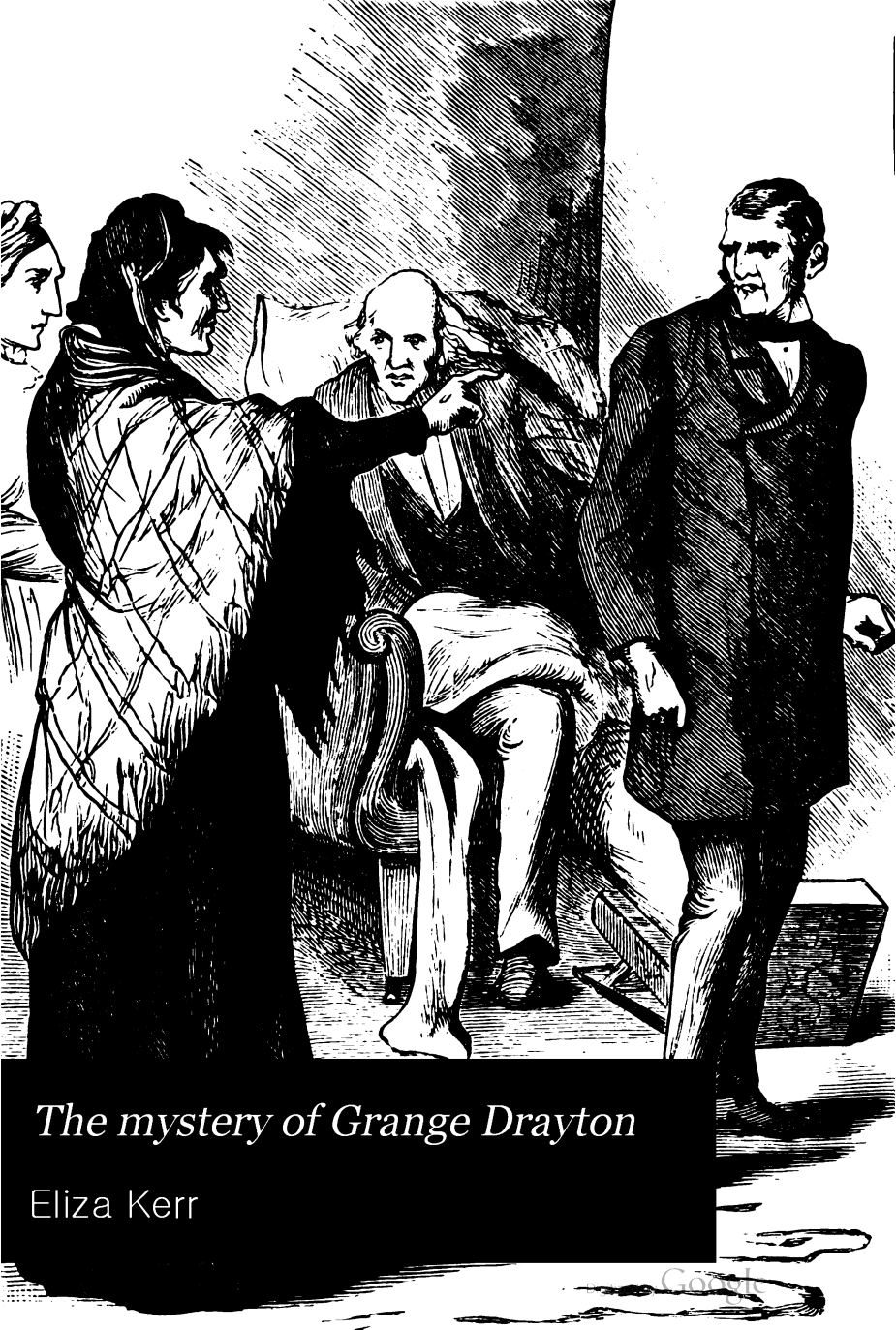

The mystery of Grange Drayton

Eliza Kerr

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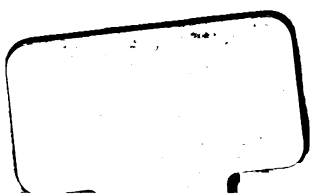

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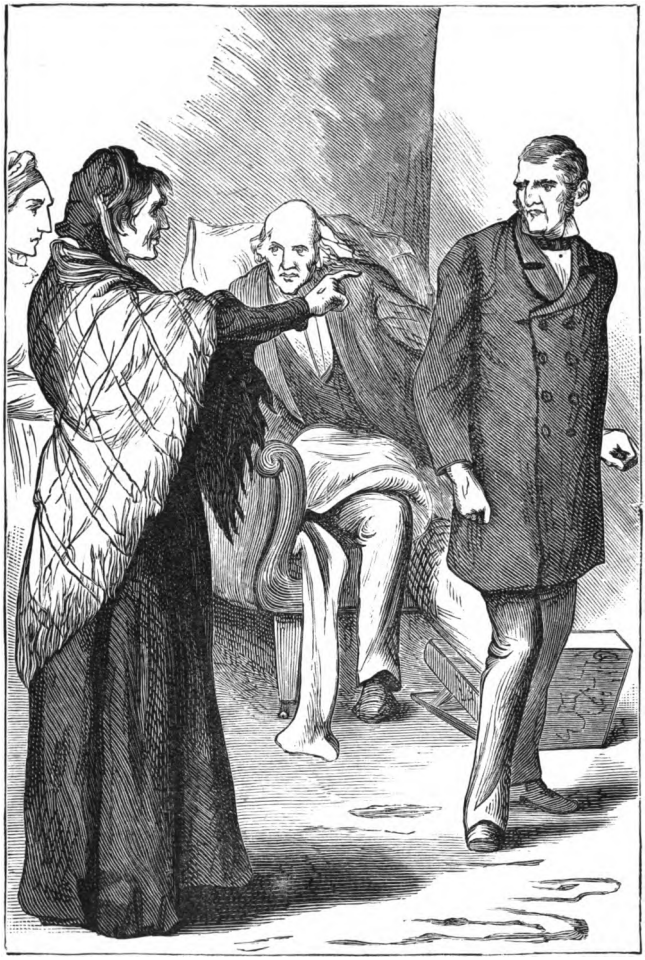

"The lawyer rose up and staggered out of the room, uttering no word."—Page 150.

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THE MYSTERY

OF

GRANGE DRAYTON.

BY

ELIZA KERR.

WESLEYAN METHODIST SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
2, Ludgate Circus Bldgs., E.C.; 2, Castle Street, City Road, E.C.

1884.

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"An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered."

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THE MYSTERY
OF
GRANGE DRAYTON.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE SPRINGTIME.

THE little town of Drayton was in the heart of the Peak country, in the land where the altars of the Druids still stand on the moorland; where the murex-stone of the Roman still lies on the hillside; where the pine and the fern fill the hollows and dells; where the woods are ever damp with the dews of earth-born waters. It was a quaint, pretty, old-fashioned little town, with four good streets in it, and many a snug flower-surrounded cottage within a few minutes' walk of it. Although it was dignified by the title

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of "town," it was scarcely more than a village, and its business was carried on in such a lazy, comfortable fashion, without bustle, and without undue anxiety, that a London shopkeeper from Tottenham Court Road or Cheapside would have thought the people all asleep, and have desired to stir them up to London activity and London bustle.

In a one-storied house just outside the town dwelt Dorothy Dalton and her aunt, Mistress Keziah. Dorothy was a young woman and very fair to look upon in every sense of the word; but Mistress Keziah had seen fifty summers, and was not handsome, although she was comely enough when she allowed her stern features to relax into a smile. Aunt and niece attended the little Wesleyan chapel on the hillside, as did most of the people of Drayton, and there was mild excitement in the neighbourhood at this time because of the advent of a new minister for the hillside congregation.

The sweet sunshine of young April was beaming through the woods, and the ground was lovely with the "rathe primrose," and the air radiant with the yellow butterflies, that

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seemed as though they were the primroses themselves that had taken wing upon the balmy winds, as Mistress Keziah wended her way home through the streets of Drayton, after having had a vigorous dispute with a neighbour over the merits and demerits of the Rev. Joseph Allgood, Wesleyan minister, "lately appointed to the town of Drayton upon the unexpected decease of its former minister."

"Such a name to give the poor man!" she muttered contemptuously, as she neared her pretty, flower-surrounded home. "As if any man was ever *all* good."

"Well, Aunt Keziah, have you succeeded in getting the ribbon?" said Dorothy, coming to the gate of the front garden, her hands full of spring blossoms, her yellow hair and brown eyes catching an additional brightness from the sun rays.

The little house was enclosed by a garden, the back portion of which had fruit trees in it, and rose bushes, and great masses of lavender and thyme, and such sweet-smelling old-fashioned flowers, while tall, vainglorious hollyhocks, and wallflowers, and mignonette

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adorned the front portion, with here and there tufts of primroses, and stretches of wild hyacinths, and many another humble, beautiful blossom.

"Yes, Ambrose Brown sold it to me. But what a tongue that man has! He's been arguing these twenty minutes back that Mr. Allgood is the best minister we've ever had, and that the congregation would do well to ask Conference to send him to us when these few months are over."

"I don't think Ambrose is far wrong, aunt. The minister is young, and when Mr. Johnson dropped down dead so suddenly it was well for us that there was such a good man to take his place until Conference."

"I say nothing against the minister," returned Mistress Keziah; "but I do say there's no man worthy of much praise, or, indeed, much blame either. He's well enough, I've no doubt, taking him all in all; but there's no reason to make a fuss over any of them."

Dorothy smiled. She knew in what estimation her aunt held the male portion of the community, and how useless it was

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to enter into a controversy with her on the subject.

"And did you hear that Lawyer Crowe has offered two rooms on the second floor of his house to the minister? Trust that old man for looking after the money. The poor creature will pay sharp for those rooms, no doubt, and Miss Sarah will give him weak tea and dry bread to aid his digestion."

"Why should not Mr. Allgood be comfortable with Lawyer Crowe and his sister?" questioned Dorothy smilingly. "I do sincerely hope he will be so. We must be kind to him, for I hear he has no women-folk belonging to him, and he must often be very lonely, and miss the many things a woman's thought and fingers could devise for his comfort."

Mistress Keziah's aspect was most forbidding as she listened to the words of her niece. Why, one would think it was a privilege to minister to the wants of men. Did *men* talk in that way about women, and did they say what a pleasure it was to help lonely women on in the world when they had no fathers or brothers to aid them?

"Did you hear how Squire Drayton was

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to-day? Ambrose might have had the latest news from Grange Drayton."

"The squire is sinking fast, they say. He will very likely go to the grave before that secret's discovered, if it ever will be discovered."

"Poor old man! I pity him sincerely."

"*You*, of all people, should not pity him, Dorothy. Hasn't that unjust accusation of his brought you misery enough? But I beg your pardon, my dear; I didn't intend to speak those words. Oh, dear! the tongue is surely an unruly member, as they say in chapel." And Mistress Keziah hurried off to the kitchen, indignant against herself because she had made that remark about Squire Drayton.

Dorothy entered the little parlour, and stood motionless before the window that opened out on the roses and the lavender and the tall fruit trees. True, it was spring-time, the time of hope and of promise, and the rose bushes and the fruit trees had put forth their buds; but for her the realisation of a hope that would have crowned her life with joy and happiness seemed

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very far off, very dim and distant, on this fair spring day.

"Oh! Harold, Harold! will the truth ever be known? Will you ever be free to claim me?" she murmured, almost despairingly, as she turned away from the window, and closed it quickly, that the gay strains of a wonderful bird-song might not reach her so clearly, mocking her with its gaiety.

* * * * *

"Now, then, what do you want to-day, Jerry? I have just returned from Ambrose Brown's shop, and there's nothing else needed at present." Mistress Keziah spoke sharply to an old man, a pedlar, who had come round to the kitchen and unfastened his pack from his bent back, and laid it on the ground. "An old man like you, nigh on seventy-five, I would say, ought to give up tramping and settle down, and think on his latter end."

"True, missus, an' so I'd dew, if I on'y know'd what my latter end 'ud be. But tha pity is, I canna tell what it'll be, an' so I canna think o't. Dew folk think o' nothin'?"

"You do, any way," muttered Miss Dalton angrily.

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The pedlar Jeremiah, or Jerry, as he was commonly called, was a poor, half-witted old man who had gained a livelihood for many a year selling ribbons and materials for dresses, and wonderful brooches composed of brass and bright-coloured glass; and although he was but half-witted, he was sharp enough when selling his goods, and never allowed himself to be cheated or underpaid. The people for many miles round the country always welcomed him gladly enough, for he picked up many a stray bit of news when going his rounds, and cheerfully amused his customers at their doors or by their hearths in the evening hours.

"Now, missus, dew buy somethin' o' ole Jerry. Look now, I hev hitten on tha very things tew grace you; just these ribbons for your bonny black hair, an' these sparklin' stones tew glower i' your ears. You'll busk yourself rarely wi' 'em, my wench. You mun want a new mossel o' finery tew dight you oop a bit."

His hearer felt wrathful at the old man's words; but she knew there was nothing to be gained by being angry with him; and, after

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all, she did want to purchase some coarse cloth from him for kitchen purposes, which he sold at a much cheaper rate than Ambrose Brown in the town. So she bade him cease his idle chatter, and show her the cloth she needed. When he had measured the desired quantity and received payment for it, he closed up his pack again, and fastened it on to his bent shoulders.

"Some day ole Jerry'll cease tew be on his rounds," he said, gravely and mysteriously. "I'm goin' to Lunnon town, missus, where money's i' plinty, and theer's na need tew go hungry whiles, yes, an' dry tew."

"You'd better stay where you are, Jerry," answered Mistress Keziah severely. "Folks that can stay out of London ought to be only too glad to do so. How would such as you live where every one pushes and drives his neighbour, and where the strong ones knock down the weak, and never stop to see if they have killed them or not?"

"Na, na, missus, I'd live theer like a mouse i' a corn-bin, an' m'appen one day I'm a-goin' theer, an' then you'll hev tew buy your floor-cloth o' Ambrose i' tha town." And the old

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man chuckled with delight at the idea of economical Mistress Keziah having to pay the full price for her "dusters" and "kitchen rubbers."

He went at a slow pace out of the fresh, sweet-smelling garden, and tramped down the road past the fine house and grounds named Grange Drayton, and away on to the high road that led to a large town some miles away. As he toiled on with his burden, he sang softly to himself in his old cracked voice an ancient ditty about "Lunnon Town" and the wonders therein to be found. When he had gone some distance, he saw a woman sitting on a stone at the side of the road, and beside her was a boy about eight years old. He stopped and stared at them both for an instant in amazement; then, for the woman was well dressed and seemed well-to-do, he lowered his pack from his back once more, and said mechanically:

"Look here now, my pratty! These arena goods tew threap (to argue) about. You'll busk yourself rarely wi' 'em. Theer bean't such a lot as this'n anywheer else our side o' the Peak."

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The stranger raised her head and glanced in a half-dazed fashion at the old man.

"What are you saying? Oh! you want me to buy some of your ribbons and your brass brooches. Ha! ha!" and she laughed long and loudly. "No, I'm not yet such a fool as to waste good money in that way, though they do say I'm always muddled. If you had something in that box of yours to drink, I might buy of you. Have you? I'm so tired, and I think I'm a long way from a town where I could get anything to drink."

"Na, missus, I doan't sell drink, but," he added slyly, "m'appen you'd give a goodish bit o' siller if I let you hev a sup o' my stuff?"

"What is your stuff?" she asked, eagerly. "If it's brandy or whisky, I'll have it, and I'll pay you all that for it," and she held out to him a trembling hand full of silver.

Old Jerry was not in the least given to drinking intoxicating liquor, but he always carried about with him a small bottle of whisky, in case he should be "taken bad some night i' tha rain or storm"; and this he now presented to the stranger, expecting her

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to drink a mouthful of it perhaps. But to his astonishment she seized upon the bottle and swallowed half its contents, meanwhile throwing the handful of silver amongst the glass brooches and gay ribbons.

"There, I am better now, old man. I must have it all; you can buy more when you reach the next town. What are you staring at? Oh, yes; I'm well dressed; and this little chap here is my son. His father's dead; and he didn't think, poor fellow, that I'd ever have the child in my possession like this. Drunk! I'm not drunk! How dare you say I'm drunk?"

"I didna say you was, missus," replied the pedlar, shrinking back from the upraised hand and loud voice of the stranger.

"No, of course you didn't. You're a kind old man to give me this bottle. I'll drink the remainder when I get thirsty again. See, I'll give you something more for it; not silver —I must keep the rest of my money, for I'm going to London, and that's a long way yet. Take these papers, and hide them safely in your pack. Hide them *safely*, old pedlar, for they're worth a lot of money. Never part

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with them, for they're worth a lot of money." She tottered to her feet suddenly, and laid hold of the child by her side. "Come on; I must get to London. Come on, boy."

Before Jerry could recover from his astonishment, she was almost out of sight, her staggering, uncertain steps taking her along the road in a wonderfully rapid manner.

He stood still, and gazed in a stupefied fashion at the papers, and then at his open pack, where, among the brooches and ribbons, lay the silver coins. "Wuth a lot o' money!" he muttered. "Hide 'em away safe: they's wuth a lot o' money."

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CHAPTER II.

LAWYER CROWE AND HIS SISTER.

THE town of Drayton had received its name, many centuries back, from a family named Drayton, who had lived in Grange Drayton before the first few houses of the present town were erected.

Grange Drayton was a large square stone house, two stories high, with wide stretches of pleasure ground around it, and pleasant fields, and fruit and vegetable gardens, belonging to it. It was a goodly heritage to descend to any man, and the little piles of gold in the county bank, which were as much a part of it as its fields and gardens, added in no small degree to its value.

The present owner of the place was old John Drayton, or "Squire Drayton." He had

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had two sons born to him. He quarrelled with the elder one, who died away in America, leaving behind him a baby boy, which he sent home to Grange Drayton. The second one, Harold, a handsome, upright youth, dwelt with his father amicably until after the advent of little Ulric Drayton, when a serious charge brought against him by the old man sent him away out of Derbyshire, a wanderer through the world. Now the squire lay alone and dying in his fine old home, and he admitted no visitors to his house except his lawyer, James Crowe. There was no apparent heir to the estate and moneys in the bank, for the boy Ulric, who was the rightful heir, had disappeared mysteriously six years previously, and the old squire had charged his son Harold with having had the child stolen, in order that he himself might inherit Grange Drayton.

All the town knew why John Drayton was dying alone in his fine house; and the folks said that Lawyer Crowe might one day be possessor of Grange Drayton, for the squire had much confidence in him, and Harold Drayton would not return home until he had found the heir, which was as much as saying

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he would never return, because, of course, the child was dead, or so changed as to be past recognition.

In a small house in West Street, the chief street of the town, dwelt Lawyer Crowe and his sister Sarah. So long had they inhabited that house that it seemed somehow a part of themselves; and the front parlour, with its ancient zinc window-screen covering the lower half of the window, to hide the interior from prying eyes, was not unlike Miss Sarah in its hopeless, economical shabbiness. The brother and sister had money enough and to spare. They could have beautified their abode, and dressed themselves comfortably, and supplied their table with food good and sufficient and healthful both for their bodies and their tempers; but Lawyer Crowe believed that "a *fool* and his money are soon parted"; and, as he considered himself a wise man, he kept his gold and silver. Miss Sarah was even more parsimonious than her brother; but it was an acquired habit with her, not her natural disposition. He gave into her hands monthly a sum of money for housekeeping purposes, which was to be used solely for such purposes;

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but even he complained that the meat placed upon the table at dinner-time was unpalatable, and the tea night and morning rather weaker than strict economy demanded.

When he made these complaints she always replied that, if he allowed her more money, she would provide better food, but she could not do so otherwise. As he was busy enough always, and his spare time was passed chiefly at Grange Drayton, he could not practically test the truth of her statements, as no doubt he would have liked to do, for he was ever suspicious, and trusted no one. So he was obliged to content himself with the food she gave him, never imagining she spoke untruly to him ; for it is often very easy to deceive a cunning and deceitful person. Besides, she attended the Wesleyan Chapel, and professed to be "serious and conscientious in the discharge of her duties" ; and, although religion was not of much use in a money point of view, religious folk, he believed, spoke the truth and dealt honourably to their own hurt.

Miss Sarah had at one time been really an upright, God-honouring woman ; but she had allowed small deceptions and petty half-

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truths to darken and overshadow the religion within her, until it had become almost second nature to her to speak and act half-truths. But she bore a good character in the town, and the people with whom she worshipped thought her a good woman, and she herself believed she was a Christian, and her words and demeanour were irreproachable.

She arrayed herself in her bonnet and long dark cloak one fine spring evening, and wended her way to the shop of Ambrose Brown, to purchase tea and sugar and other household necessaries. Ambrose Brown was very well off, indeed, and a leader in the Wesleyan chapel. He owned two shops; one he called a "Grocery and General Provision Establishment," the other a "Drapery Establishment"; it was to the former of these that Miss Crowe took her way on this fine evening. When she entered the shop she beheld Mr. Brown himself standing behind the counter.

"Good evening to you, Mr. Brown. I have come for my usual supply of tea and sugar, and I also require a small quantity of bacon."

"I shall be happy to serve you, Miss Sarah. Three-shilling tea, I think, you get?"

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"Quarter of a pound of three-shilling, and a pound and a quarter of two-shilling," she said hastily.

"You should be tempted to take it all at three shillings. That two-shilling stuff is poor enough for those who can afford better."

"But I do have *some* at three shillings. I like to mix my tea, Mr. Brown."

"Very good, Miss Sarah; you shall be served as you like, of course. What do you think of our new minister? You heard him last Sunday."

"If I might offer an opinion on the subject, I would say that he appears a worthy young man, and a truly pious one."

"Just what I think," returned Ambrose heartily. "He has the true grip of the thing, Bible, verses, and all, and I for one will be contented, and more than contented with him."

"It is well for him that he has you on his side, Mr. Brown," said Miss Crowe mildly, as she eyed critically a piece of bacon, the price of which seemed within the sum she usually allowed for that article of food. Ambrose laughed good-humouredly.

"I don't know about that, Miss Sarah, but I do know that Miss Dalton was here this

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afternoon, and her opinion of the minister was not a favourable one. At least," and he hastily corrected himself, "her words led me to believe that."

"The opinion of Miss Dalton is not worth much, for she is a sharp-tongued, self-satisfied woman," commented the lawyer's sister sternly.

"She has a quick tongue, and does speak out her mind, but she is an upright, sensible woman, though not a professor, I'm sorry to say."

Miss Crowe did not answer further. She greatly disliked a war of words, for she had always fared badly when her brother was her opponent, and she had grown timid and nervous in consequence.

"I hear Mr. Allgood is to lodge with you," pursued Ambrose Brown. "I wonder you care to trouble yourself with a lodger, even though it is the minister."

"We are not so rich as the folk seem to think, and besides, I may be able to make him more comfortable than he would be living by himself."

"No doubt you will; it is dull at best for a man to live alone. Have you all you need at present Good evening, then, Miss Crowe."

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She pursued her way homewards, pondering deeply as to the advisability of ceasing to frequent the shop of Ambrose Brown. He was growing inquisitive and interfering. If he should meet James Crowe some time, and say that three-shilling tea was better than two-shilling, it would be most unpleasant and awkward. There was that quiet man, Joseph Mar, who kept a provision shop in East Street, he would give whatever she desired and ask no questions about it. She thought she really would try him. But, then, James did wish her to go to Brown's shop.

When the dingy house in West Street was reached, Miss Sarah locked away her purchases securely, and went into the parlour to prepare tea. She found her brother sitting in an arm-chair close to the small fire, for he was not a young man, and the spring sun was hardly strong enough yet to warm him comfortably.

"The minister has come, Sarah, so you'd better add something to the tea-table. Was his room ready for him?"

"Yes, James. I hope he will be a quiet man, for it is the room over this."

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"Oh, he'll be quiet enough. Make a good cup of tea to-night, for I'm tired. Old John Drayton would try the patience and temper of a saint, and I'm not that."

Miss Sarah put an extra spoonful into the tea-pot because the minister had come, and then she turned to her brother:

"You might as well arrange now how much money you will give me for the lodger's board. Remember, I shall have all the trouble of attending on him."

"I cannot give you much more, and you know that," returned the lawyer impatiently. "We took him in, in order that we might *make* by the transaction, and he pays badly, for Wesleyan ministers are not, as a rule wealthy men."

"But I can only just manage now for two people; am I to feed him on nothing? He will not preach very good sermons on that fare."

"Nonsense, Sarah; of course I will give you a little more money. He is a long time making his preparations in his room. Give me a cup of tea while I wait; the evening is chilly, and I am tired, as I said before."

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Very reluctantly Miss Sarah complied with her brother's request. If she poured out a cup of tea now, she must add more water to the tea-pot, and then it would be very weak indeed for the minister. Besides, the tea was hardly ready yet

"This is poor stuff, Sarah. Do you buy three-shilling tea?"

"Yes," replied Miss Crowe, nervously and half angrily; "but the tea has only been infused. You must expect it to be watery." She did buy three-shilling tea, but there was no need to tell James that she bought only a quarter of a pound of it. If she did not manage in some such way, she would have no money of her own, and really it was not a lie after all. James did not say, "Do you buy *no other* but three-shilling tea?"

The lawyer cast temptation in the way of his sister by pretending they were much poorer than they truly were, and by refusing to give her sufficient money for her own necessities. She did not quite believe his statement concerning their income, so she entered upon a system involving petty deceits and half-truths in order to obtain money.

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By-and-by she began to hoard up the pence and the shillings thus acquired, until the habit grew upon her, and people said she was as penurious as her brother.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting too long," said the minister, as he entered the melancholy little parlour, with its six horse-hair chairs standing in a row against the wall, and its two well-worn arm-chairs with white antimacassars over their backs, to hide in a measure their shabbiness. Indeed, there were many antimacassars of a greyish-white colour adorning (?) the furniture; for Miss Crowe washed them fortnightly herself, and used no soap in the process; so they proved a cheaper covering than chintz, and "really the chairs and sofa were rather worn, and needed something to hide their dilapidated appearance."

When the lawyer invited Mr. Allgood to seat himself at the tea-table, the minister hesitated. Upon what should he sit? Those six chairs, with their dingy-white coverings, seemed as if they had remained in their respective positions for years, and the sofa was quite away in a dark corner, as if

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undergoing chastisement for some misdeed. There only remained the second arm-chair, but that was evidently Miss Crowe's seat.

"Take a chair, Mr. Allgood, take a chair," said the lawyer, half impatiently. "You must require your tea, and I am sure I do."

Thus commanded, the minister timidly disturbed the array of chairs against the wall, and having chosen one at random, conscious all the while that Miss Sarah's eyes were upon him, seated himself. As the antimacassar upon it was not in any way fastened, it became a little crushed heap behind his back, which fact did not add to his comfort when he became aware of it.

After the meal was over, the lawyer returned to his armchair by the fire, Miss Sarah went to the kitchen, and the minister signified his attention of paying a visit to Miss Dorothy Dalton.

"Ay, he may visit Miss Dorothy," muttered James Crowe, when he was left alone; "but when a handsome lad like young Drayton failed, as I was careful he should, a poor minister will not have much chance of

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winning her. She will be my wife if only Harold Drayton's pride keeps him away long enough. I wonder how long John Drayton will live. The doctor gave up all hope of saving his life, and yet he lives. I am not a young man myself. What if he should outlive me, after all?" At that thought the natural colour receded from the man's face, leaving him deadly pale. His lips trembled, as he murmured audibly, "No, no; he could not outlive me, and the child will never be found."

"James," cried Miss Sarah, entering the room hurriedly at that moment, "I saw Mr. Harold Drayton pass the house just now. If he should have found the boy, what excitement there would be."

To her extreme amazement and horror, her brother tottered to his feet, and then sank back into his chair, gasping for breath and moaning feebly.

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CHAPTER III.

IN PAWN.

IT was a cold wet night at the end of April. The streets of London were rain-washed, and the light in the lamps, blown hither and thither by the sharp, cutting wind, cast uncertain, quivering gleams across the faces of the people passing to and fro along the crowded thoroughfares. It was a miserable night, such as will come sometimes even in the month of April; for the English climate is, of a truth, variable.

Over Blackfriars Bridge staggered a woman thinly clad, and whose black hair was mud-stained and tossed about her pallid face by the keen blast from the river. A little boy held her hand and tried to

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steady her tottering steps, though his assistance was not of much avail, for he was but eight years old, and weak from long-fasting and exposure to the weather.

"Mammy, where are we going?" he asked in a faint voice, as the woman stood still suddenly, and looked about her in evident bewilderment.

"Going, child! why we're going home, to be sure. Oh! I forgot; we haven't any home, have we?"

"Yes, that room in the high house a long way in front of us."

"Oh, the Elephant and Castle hole? No, we haven't even that now, for I had no money to pay for it. I have nothing more to pawn; if I had, there's an old man I know of who would give me on anything, no matter what it is or how I got it. Ah! let's go on and visit him; perhaps I may think of something before I reach his door."

The lights of Ludgate Circus grew fainter until they finally disappeared, as the woman and the boy proceeded onward, the rain dripping from her thin garments and from his uncovered head. The boy made no

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complaint and shed no tears as he dragged himself tiredly on, his feet heavy and painful from mud and wet, and many a bruise and cut.

He was accustomed to starvation and cold; and, although he had never to endure blows or ill-words from the woman he called mother, he never expected to receive kindness or gentle speech from her, or bodily comfort in any way. He was but eight years old, and he was not a London waif, yet he had learned the bitter, sad lesson of endurance and silence which so many poor children learn. He had known little else in his short life but privation; why, therefore, should he make moan over his woes? If one had told him that brighter days were in store for him; that he would be fed and clothed, and have childish amusement and pleasure, he would probably have stared in uncomprehending carelessness, understanding only the words "food" and "clothes"; so had an existence of poverty and ignorance dulled his senses.

There are many streets in London—dark, dingy streets—where dwell people whose

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actions would not bear a close inspection in the broad daylight. Into one of these streets turned the woman and the boy, and entered a shop at the further end of it, quite away from the busy thoroughfare near to it. It was a small shop, with old clothes and some old china in its solitary window. The house in which it was stood four stories high; tall, narrow, and very shabby in appearance. Behind the counter sat an old man with spectacles on his nose, and a black silk cap on his bald head.

"What do you want?" he demanded, in rude, quavering accents, when he became aware that he was no longer alone. "Oh! it's you, is it?" he continued, as his glance fell upon the intruders. "And what might you be wanting now? If it's money you expect, I cannot give it to you for nothing."

"I don't want you to give it to me for nothing," answered the woman defiantly. "I have something of value—real value—to pawn this time,"

"What is it?" he inquired incredulously. "I took all you had a long time ago

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Except you've been stealing something, you have nothing on which I could lend you money."

"Haven't I?"

"Well, show it to me then, and be quick about it. Put it on the counter here." And he rose from his seat, and approached the counter, peering with evident curiosity through his spectacles.

She laughed mockingly.

"I don't think I'll put it on the counter, old Anderson. It would be a heavy weight for my arms to lift."

"Well, then, show it to me," the old man returned, impatiently. "You drink so much that you've weakened yourself in your prime. Now, I never drink; it's such a senseless waste of money, besides taking the strength from the body. *I'll* be able to lift your wonderful article. Come, be quick."

"No, then, you'll not be able to lift it, strong and sober as you are. What a pity I'm not strong and sober," she went on, tauntingly. "I could keep a pawnshop, then, and rob the poor people, and tell lies to the police."

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"If you don't have a civil tongue in your head, I won't even look at your article."

"Oh yes, you will! You're dying of curiosity this minute. Well, stoop your old head over that high barrier of yours, and you'll see the article sitting on that chair. It must have been well tired, or it'd never have dared to sit with all those dirty clothes on it in your respectable chair in your respectable shop."

"You're drunk, woman," said the man, in a disappointed, disgusted tone.

"No, I'm not drunk. I was a little the worse for whisky a couple of hours ago; but I'm quite sober now. I'm speaking sober truth now. The little muddy boy sitting there is the article I want to pawn. No doubt I'll miss him at first, after you have taken him, and lent me the money on him, for he has saved me from many a fall, and brought me out of the streets in safety; but I'll grow accustomed to mind myself by-and-by. Now, what are you going to lend me on him?"

The old pawnbroker stared at her angrily.

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"Get out, you stupid-headed creature. Who would lend you money on a child?"

"See, here, old Anderson," she whispered, in quite a different tone, as she leaned over the counter; "I've been talking rubbish to you, but I'm in downright earnest now. You know that I've plenty of sense and cunning, for all my drinking ways. Well, you are old, and you've no one belonging to you. You want a boy to help you in your work, and you can't have a London lad, because he'd be too sharp for you, and use his eyes and ears too keenly. Take this child of mine for a while, and lend me some money on him. He's stupid and quiet. He knows no one in London, and no one'll know him. He never talks, and his ideas are few and far between. I'll pawn him regularly, and you must give him up to me when I pay back the money and interest. Come! It's a good chance for you."

"Why, I never heard of such a business transaction," gasped the old man, when his astonishment allowed him to speak. "No, no, I couldn't do it. It would be too irregular, even for my trade."

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"Not a bit of it. And who'd be any the wiser? You won't ill-treat the boy; that's not your way any more than it's mine. If you ever are asked questions about him—which you never will be—there's nothing remarkable in your having a small boy to assist you in the shop and house."

But Joseph Anderson hesitated. It was true that he needed assistance in his work, and it was also true that he did not care to bring a London lad into his house; but this proposition of the woman's was too startling to be quickly answered.

"Why do you delay, old Anderson? There is nothing really wrong in what I have proposed. Oh, yes, it *sounds* bad to say I've pawned the child! but, after all, what difference does it make to hire him to you, or to pawn him? Hire and pawn are two different *words*, certainly. Hurry; I'm tired, and he has gone to sleep, poor little chap."

"If I did it, you'd let it all out the next time you were drunk."

"No, I wouldn't. I only made a real fool of myself in that way once, and then it wasn't my tongue that was in fault. I gave some

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things away once, and I wish I had them now. I won't wait much longer for your answer. Is it yes, or no?"

The man was sorely tempted. This boy was just such a one as he desired; one who would understand no questions put to him, and who would be silent and quiet always. Yes, he would lend the money on this odd "article," and, if the worst came to the worst, he could maintain that the boy had been hired from his mother.

"Ah! you are going to make out the ticket, I see. Sensible old man! Waken up, child; you'll sleep under a decent roof to-night. Perhaps you'll have a bed to yourself, too; so you'll be fine and comfortable."

"Am I pawned?" The boy opened his eyes suddenly and asked the question gravely, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to pawn a child.

"Mercy on us! he has heard all we have been saying," screamed the old man in affright.

"No, he hasn't. Don't be a fool," said the woman sharply. "Yes, I've pawned you to this old man, for I'm very poor, you know;

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but I'll come back one day and release you. Do you know what I'm saying? Is there anything you'd like to ask me?"

"No; I'm an article pawned like the rest of the things, and one day you'll come back for me. Take care and don't fall into the river when you're crossing the bridge." Then he closed his eyes again and leaned his head against the chair-back.

"You see," whispered the woman to the still frightened old man, "he's not very bright in his head, and no wonder. Give me the money and the ticket. Stay—I have them. I'll take *four* of those gold pieces, if you please. His stupidity is worth more than that any day."

Before Joseph Anderson could interfere, she had caught up the money and the ticket, and disappeared through the door out into the rain-washed, wind-swept street.

For the first few days, the boy, whom old Anderson called Nat, because he knew no name but "child" or "boy," was very stupid and very dull of comprehension, but by degrees, he became familiar with the duties required of him, and then his master was

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glad that he had him. He seldom stayed in the little shop. His business was, to make the fire in the mornings, and prepare the meals, and keep the parlour, his master's bedroom, and his own attic as tidy as he could. Old Anderson helped him with the work which required more physical strength than an ill-fed young boy such as he possessed ; or else it was left altogether undone, which latter was oftener the case. Five of the rooms above the shop and back parlour were filled with bundles of clothes, tied up carefully, and laid on shelves which lined the walls all round the rooms. Jewellery and other such valuable articles were concealed by the pawnbroker in tin boxes in his own bedroom, where he could personally see after their safety.

Nat was kept very busy in those rooms upstairs. The bundles of clothes, boots and shoes, and even books, were untied at regular intervals, and dusted carefully and fastened up again ; for about once a year the old man took many of the bundles and brought them away, and sold them to some "agent for left-off clothes," who sent them out to the colonies,

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perhaps, or disposed of them to poor English men and women. The things in those rooms had therefore to be in a good state of preservation, or old Anderson would obtain but a poor price for them.

Often the boy mused in his strange fashion over these bundles, and wondered if they had any knowledge of the fact that they were in pawn. He was glad he was a living "article," so that he could not be conveniently placed upon the counter to be valued by the shrewd eyes of the pawnbroker, or be hidden away on the dusty shelves in those dark rooms where the mice ran races and squealed so loudly. It was part of his work to set traps for those same mice, and he did not like it. They had been unmolested for so long that they had grown quite daring, and hardly regarded him when he dusted the shelves and swept the floors as well as he could. The master said that they must be killed, for they injured the property; so he was obliged to set the traps, and stop up the holes in the sides of the walls and in the floors; but all the while he was afraid of their sharp little eyes, and of their little busy, dark bodies. If he had dared, he

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would have disobeyed this order of old Anderson's. But he himself was pawned, and he had no right and no power to resist the pawnbroker, any more than if he were one of those bundles of clothes, or one of those rugs or old carpets.

The articles in those upstair rooms were not all old. There were pretty, dainty shawls and dresses, and a white frock or two, wonderfully embroidered, which had belonged, no doubt, to some petted, indulged child. These latter were tenderly folded in clean paper, and put away into some empty boxes. The boy could not have explained why he felt pity for them, but he would touch them gently with his fingers, and dream over them until he fancied they were alive. They were so different from the dusty, dirty clothes on the shelves, that they pleased him and hurt him at the same moment. There was a time, perhaps, when they had not been in pawn and when they had been where there was joy and sunshine, and the laughter of happy, beautiful children. Ah! would he ever be in such a place?

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CHAPTER IV.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

LAWYER CROWE had been very poorly and confined to his bed for some days after the unexpected appearance of Mr. Harold Drayton in the vicinity of his old home. Now he was nearly well again, and able to resume his business in the town, and his visits to the sick chamber of Squire Drayton. He had taken cold, Miss Sarah thought, or, perhaps, overworked himself attending to the fancies of the old squire, and the various demands made upon him by his numerous clients. Certainly it was strange that he should drop down in his chair so suddenly, just because she mentioned the fact of Mr. Harold's having passed the house. But then the affairs of the Draytons had always

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been a source of anxiety to him, and there was no use at all in that young man's paying a visit to Drayton, because, of course, he and Miss Dorothy Dalton could never be married.

One evening, shortly after the recovery of the lawyer, the new minister, Mr. Allgood, expressed a wish to visit old Squire Drayton. He spoke of it to James Crowe at the tea-table, in the gloomy little front parlour, from whence the screen and the blind carefully excluded the yellow gleam of the setting sun.

"He is the only one of my people whom I have not seen, and I should like to make his acquaintance, and especially as he is so ill and so lonely."

"I am afraid he will not thank you for your visit," said the lawyer, with a faint smile. "You have, no doubt, been told the story of Grange Drayton."

"Yes, I have heard it from several people," returned Mr. Allgood gravely; "and I cannot help pitying that poor old man, and thinking that he has made some mistake in this sad affair."

"Ah! of course the good townsfolk have given it to you, with their several comments

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on it. If you want a place where gossip—senseless, interfering gossip—flourishes, come to Drayton. Indeed, most small places have busybodies and mischief-makers in them, but I think Drayton is about the worst of them all."

"Why, James," said Miss Sarah mildly, "this story is no gossip, but a fact known to every one here. Of course, Mr. Allgood, some of the people think the old squire was right in turning out his son, and some of them think he was wrong. My brother believes he was right. I do not know what to think myself. I am naturally inclined to agree with James, but I do sometimes pity the loneliness of the old squire."

The lawyer moved his chair impatiently. What talkers women were, to be sure!

"In *my* mind, there can be no doubt of the correctness of the squire's action," he said, in his most lawyer-like tone, a tone which usually quelled his sister, but which seemed now to produce no effect upon Mr. Allgood. The minister and Mistress Keziah Dalton were the only two on whom that lawyer-like brevity and severity were thrown away.

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"How sad it is for the son, also," said the minister. "It is very hard for him to have to wander over the world because his father brought such an accusation against him."

"He does not wander over the world. He has a nice little sum of money, which was left to him by his dead mother's father, and this he has invested in a solicitor's business in London. He is getting on very well indeed. He only wanders about when he thinks he has heard something of the missing heir, or, rather, when he *pretends* he has heard something. He was down here quite lately, and I hear he has gone up to Yorkshire, and purposes returning this way. If I had my will, I would prohibit his coming here at all. It only disturbs his father, for, of course, kind gossip reaches even the sick room, and it can do no one any good."

"It is two years since he was here before, brother."

"Yes, and I wish it would be twenty before he comes again."

"But he never sees his father; so what

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harm can his coming do?" spoke the minister.

"I cannot explain to you all the difficulties of the case, and you are a new comer; so you would scarcely comprehend if I tried to do so."

Mr. Allgood smiled. "Well, we will give up the subject for the present."

"If you would care to come with me now, I can take you to Grange Drayton. You will not receive much of a welcome, as I said, but proof is better than words. You will be convinced of the accuracy of my statement when you have seen the old squire."

Now, the minister had no desire to pay the visit to Grange Drayton in company with the lawyer. He wished to go alone, but he had no excuse for declining the proposition, so he arose cautiously from the chair which had the greyish-white antimacassar adorning its back, and, taking his hat, followed Mr. Crowe into the street.

The road leading out of the town was lined with trees newly dight in all their bravery of spring attire, and from the

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gardens surrounding the cottages and little two-storied houses sweet, faint perfumes filled the air. Standing at her gate, with a bunch of spring blossoms in her belt, was Dorothy Dalton. There was a brighter flush than usual on her cheeks, and in her eyes there beamed a glad, expectant light.

"Who can she be waiting for?" wondered the lawyer, half angrily. "That smiling face is not for me, or the minister either."

"Good evening to you, Miss Dorothy," he said aloud, as they drew near to the gate. "We are going up to Grange Drayton. The minister, here, thinks he would like to do his duty by the old squire. His wish is proper and correct, but I fear my client will not be very thankful for the visit."

Dorothy smiled on Mr. Allgood.

"The minister is right," she said gently; "whether Squire Drayton receives him kindly or not."

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders slightly. "You religious people quite overlook the feelings or inclinations of outsiders whenever you feel called upon to perform what you call your duty towards them."

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"We irreligious people do the same thing, I'm thinking," said Mistress Keziah, appearing unexpectedly from behind Dorothy. "Lawyer Crowe and Mistress Keziah Dalton don't profess to be Christians, Mr. Allgood, like my niece Dorothy here; but a little Christianity might put some charity into us, and take some viciousness out of us."

With a hurried "Good even," James Crowe hastily continued on his way, followed in some wonder by Mr. Allgood.

"It is that awful-tongued woman," he explained to the minister. "Whenever Mistress Keziah appears, I disappear. Her niece, Dorothy, is very different."

"I believe there is much good in Mistress Keziah, although she seems to delight in telling people occasionally that she is no professing Christian. She is thoroughly honourable and upright, and a just woman, and one who would serve a neighbour in distress."

"You have formed a pretty good opinion of her on a short acquaintance. Do you know she looks upon men in general with contempt?"

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"Oh, yes, I soon learnt that from her manner; but she has already been most kind to me, in spite of her dislike to men."

"Well, here we are at Grange Drayton. Is not this a fine avenue leading up to the house?" And he looked round him with all the pride of a proprietor. "And see what a handsome, substantial building the house is. The old man keeps but a few indoor servants now, for they are not necessary. I generally let myself in and out at this side door with a key, to save trouble and delay. Come, I will leave you in this little study while I go and announce you in the sick chamber."

"Could I not go in unannounced?"

"Oh dear no! Such a proceeding would agitate my client too much."

James Crowe closed the little study door after him and crossed the great hall, and ascended the wide staircase to the chamber of the dying old man.

"I have brought a visitor with me who wishes to see you," he announced abruptly, as he entered the room.

"A visitor! I see no visitors," was the

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angry, impatient answer. "Why did you bring him here?"

"Because he would take no denial. It is the new Wesleyan minister come in the place of Johnson, deceased."

"What do I care about Johnson, deceased?"

"Nothing; so I will go and tell this man that he may go home again as he came."

"Did you say, Wesleyan minister? Stay a minute."

But the lawyer had already quitted the room, and his quick steps soon brought him back to the little study and the waiting minister.

"He refuses to see you, just as I expected he would. He bid me say that he does not receive visitors. I am sorry you had your walk for nothing, but, you know, you would come."

Disappointedly Mr. Allgood closed the heavy gate behind him, and retraced his way along the pretty country road.

* * * *

"I have followed up the clue most carefully, and nothing has come of it, my Dorothy." The speaker was Harold Drayton,

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and he was standing beside Dorothy at the open window which looked out on the sweet old-world garden at the back of the house. "From what I can learn, I should say she has been here, and there was a child with her. I know her appearance well, for I saw her once, after Ulric came to Grange Drayton, and then my father sent her back to America, as she desired, and gave her a large sum of money. She did not want the child at all. If she were the one to take it, as I believe she was, I can scarcely understand the motive for her action."

"And must you go away again for another long time?" said Dorothy, mournfully. "It is two years since I saw you, and now how long will it be?"

"It would not have been so long, my dearest, but that I was in America and Australia. I will stay in London now, I think, and try what money and skill will do for me there in my search. If your aunt permits me, I can come and see you sometimes."

"If I had my way," said Miss Dalton, entering the room at that moment, "I would

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tell you to remain with her always, or stay away always. Don't talk to me about proper pride. It is poor pride that can hurt so cruelly as yours is now doing. I cannot understand Dorothy. You are well enough in your way, but how she can trouble herself about a *memory*—for you have been scarcely more than that these four years back—is more than I can comprehend. If I were she, I would marry you or give you up altogether. The latter course would be my advice to her, I need not say."

"But you would not have me come to her with a tarnished name?" he questioned sadly.

"I don't suppose she thinks much about your name. You know she does not want your money, for she has plenty of her own."

"I could not sit down under a false accusation, and *such* a one," he replied firmly. "I agree with you, that it is wiser for me to stay away until I can prove my innocence, and in the meantime she is free to act as she wishes."

"Pretty freedom, that," muttered Miss Dalton, as she quitted the room again.

"He is a good lad, a good lad," she

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murmured to herself, when she reached her own room ; " but he is strong-willed, like the rest of them."

" You would not wish me to give up trying to prove my innocence, would you, my Dorothy ?" He was standing at the gate with her now, for it was time for him to be gone.

" No," she answered, with trembling lips. " But it is very difficult sometimes to be patient. I pray our Father to send you success soon, but my prayer has not yet been answered, and it is now six years."

" Do not fear and do not cease to pray ; it will come, and no doubt of it."

While they stood together at the gate, the minister passed on his way back from Grange Drayton, and he understood at once that Dorothy Dalton would never forget Harold Drayton. He looked at them with a half-regretful, half-sorrowful sigh, and paused for an instant for a word of greeting from Dorothy and her friend ; then he continued on his way, for they had not seen him.

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CHAPTER V.

A TEA PARTY.

"AUNT KEZIAH, I would like to invite Miss Sarah Crowe and the minister to-night."

"Why do you want Miss Sarah?" inquired Miss Dalton. "I do not care for that woman, although she is a shining light in your chapel."

"She is a good woman, aunt, although she has little odd ways. There is no harm in saving money, and buying things more cheaply than other folk with her means. You yourself are inclined to be economical."

"Yes, my dear, but there's a difference between economy and stinginess. She is no poorer than we are, and yet she lives in a way that must be bad both for her temper and her digestion."

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"How do you know that, except you have been listening to gossip against her?" questioned Dorothy, laughingly, for Miss Dalton had a great dislike to gossip.

"I once dined and took tea with her," was the answer, given with great significance. "And I asked the minister if Miss Sarah gave him good tea, and good bread and butter, to assist his thoughts when he was sermon-making."

"Really, aunt, you will put unkind suspicions into Mr. Allgood's head. Don't, dear, for it would be so wrong and cruel. I think,"—and the girl spoke hesitatingly, for she loved her aunt, and understood her as no one else did—"that you carry your dislike to Miss Sarah too far."

"I don't dislike her, but I certainly dislike her brother. He is just the one to kill any goodness there might be in a timid, wavering woman. I remember when Miss Crowe was a much more energetic member of the chapel, and a more good-natured, kind-hearted body. No doubt her brother has managed to lower the tone of her religion in some way. Very likely it is not all her fault, poor soul."

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"But she is a Christian, aunt."

"Oh yes, my dear, but there are Christians *and* Christians! I know which sort I would like to be."

"You ought to make allowance for the dispositions of people. When *you* confess openly that you are a disciple of Christ, you will be an outspoken, determined one, and neither minister nor leader will really guide you. Miss Sarah's disposition is totally different from yours."

"Yes, of course it is, because she is under the thumb of one of the worst specimens of the male sex. And who told you, Niece Dorothy, that I would ever be a professor?"

Dorothy smiled. "Well, aunt, shall I ask the minister and Miss Crowe? We might discuss that question of timid and assertive Christians at the tea-table."

"Of course, ask them. But why do you leave out the lawyer himself?"

"I am afraid he will not care to come. However, I can ask him."

So Dorothy set out for the house in West Street to invite the lawyer, his sister, and the minister to tea. She was shown into the

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front parlour, where Miss Sarah sat engaged in sewing up a hole in an antimacassar previous to washing it.

"How do you do, Miss Dorothy? Pray be seated. You will excuse my continuing my work."

"Certainly, Miss Sarah. Would you not find that crochet covers last longer on the chairs than those woven ones you buy in the shops?"

"Yes, of course they do. I have one worked by my dear mother in her school days, and it is as good as ever now, and has lasted out three sets of these woven things which I bought in Ambrose Brown's shop."

"You should crochet a set, Miss Sarah."

"So I would, if I only knew how to do so. Perhaps you would teach me sometime, when you have a spare hour," and the faded face of the lawyer's sister brightened wonderfully at the idea of learning such a useful and economical accomplishment.

"I will, with pleasure. Suppose we begin this evening? I have come to ask if you, your brother, and the minister will take tea with us this evening. Aunt will have some of her famous cakes for us, and you might bring

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cotton and a needle, and I could show you how to crochet a pretty antimacassar which I worked a while ago."

"Thank you, I will come with pleasure, and so will Mr. Allgood, I am sure; but you know my brother is very uncertain in his movements. If he is not too busy, he may come. I will give him your kind message."

"Then I will not detain you longer now. We shall have tea about five."

Miss Dalton's pretty parlour looked a picture of snugness and comfort, and withal of neatness, that evening, as Dorothy sat down in it with her guests to wait the announcement of tea. The window at the back was wide open, and admitted the warm-scented breeze, and the jubilant songs of the birds in the trees, and the hum and buzz of the flies and winged insects. Miss Crowe's eyes took note of the gay chintz covers on the soft, crimson velvet chairs, and the one or two daintily-worked antimacassars, whose subdued yet rich tints toned down the brightness of the chintz. The unfaded dark-hued carpet and sheepskin rugs formed an artistic background for all the colouring.

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Certainly this parlour was very different from the little gloomy one in West Street; yet Lawyer Crowe was even better off than Miss Dalton. He had a large income from his business, but he allowed none of it to be spent in outward adornment. A pretty, cheerful house was not eatable, nor yet drinkable, nor was it good for clothing purposes; so why spend money on such a useless commodity? To him, as to many another in the world, it was inconceivable how people could require anything more for their comfort and well-being than food and drink sufficient to satisfy hunger and thirst, and a house to keep out the cold.

Miss Sarah began to feel in a dim fashion that God must have had some wise object in view when He painted the flowers in so many different colours, and gave the butterflies such gay and beautiful clothing. Had He wished, He might have arrayed them all in dark brown of a faded, worn-out hue; they could have existed in garments of that sober tint; and He might have prohibited the birds from singing such elaborate, sweetly-harmonised oratorios.

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She did not reason quite so clearly within herself, but she was moved to an unusual kindliness of manner, and she smiled once or twice at the wordy warfare occasionally indulged in by Miss Keziah and her niece, and patted the head of the great black Persian cat that lay on the rug in the breakfast-room where the tea was served.

"I hope you have taken your tea heartily, Mr. Allgood," said Miss Keziah, when they had reassembled in the parlour after the repast was ended. "There is only one day between us and Sunday, and you cannot give us a good sermon if you are hungry, or have eaten food which is not of a strengthening and enlivening nature?"

Mr. Allgood laughed. "You think, then, that the brain depends on the body for help?"

"Yes, of course. If you are hungry, you get a headache, and if you have dined off a greasy chop and a pale-brown-water cup of tea, you take a melancholy view of life and religion. In either case your hearers suffer; and that is very wrong on your part. If your body is not healthy and comfortable, your religion will be

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miserable, and that is a sort of thing none of us want."

"Then what about the martyrs, and many great preachers and teachers who have practised self-denial?"

"We live in the nineteenth century, when there is such a lot of work wanted out of *one* poor man or woman, that they need strong, healthy bodies to answer the demand. To accomplish any good, each one needs to do the work of two, and a sickly, sentimental worker will perform sickly, sentimental work. Mind, I am not saying that you should sit down and over-eat yourself; there is too much poverty in the world to admit of that sort of thing."

"I think I know what you mean," said Mr. Allgood. "But I hope I shall never preach sickly, sentimental sermons, or a sickly doctrine."

"If you are not careful, you will. All young men fall into that fashion at the beginning. They should surround themselves as much as possible with what is congenial to them, and then the world might have a more cheerful religion."

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The minister thought just then that there was a wide difference between his present surroundings and his apartments and companions in West Street. Miss Sarah's tea was not so reviving in its effects as Miss Dalton's potent cups, and a meal eaten in silence was scarcely so good for digestion as the one just concluded, in which conversation and food had had an equal share.

"From my aunt's remarks, you would naturally conclude, Mr. Allgood, that she lived *only* to eat and drink, but such is not the case," said Dorothy laughingly, as she raised her head from the pretty crochet pattern she was making for Miss Sarah, whose eyes were eagerly watching the nimble white fingers, while her ears had been taking in, with no little astonishment, Miss Dalton's remarks. If James could only have heard them! But he never would go anywhere within hearing of Miss Dalton's voice if he could possibly help it.

"Oh! I know Miss Keziah now," returned Mr. Allgood; "and I know that she comprehends the meaning of the word unselfishness."

"You know nothing about me," spoke Miss Keziah, with an amused twinkle in her bright

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shrewd eyes. "What was that question we were going to submit to Mr. Allgood, Dorothy? Something about timid and assertive Christians, I think."

"Yes. We were wondering, Mr. Allgood, if our dispositions coloured our Christianity. For instance, if I am placed in pleasant circumstances, and surrounded by large-hearted, noble Christians, and my neighbour, also a Christian, is in an exactly opposite condition, is it any wonder that my Christianity seems more assertive and enlivening than his?"

"No; I don't think so. You may remark that some people are peculiarly susceptible to outward influences; and, of course, there are others who are strong enough to overcome all such obstacles to Christian growth. We who are strong should endeavour to assist the weaker ones, and not cast temptation in their way. There are many things which would be no temptation to us, and could have no influence over us, which cause them to sin, and darken the light within them. Such a little sin will harm us, and grow into larger ones! Those who cast temptation in the way

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of those weaker Christians are, to my mind, guilty of a great wickedness."

"We would have a busy time of it if we were as watchful as you would wish us to be, Mr. Allgood," said Miss Sarah uneasily. Had she ever allowed herself to be tempted to indulge in petty sins?

"Not a more busy time of it than all Christians should have. Where is the use in being half-hearted in the matter? We pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.' We ought also to pray, 'Permit us not to lead others into temptation.'"

* * * *

"Well, how did you enjoy your tea, Sarah?" inquired the lawyer, when his sister entered the parlour about nine o'clock that evening, and found him seated at a desk, busy with papers; the minister had returned with Miss Sarah, but had gone upstairs to his own apartments.

"Very much. Miss Dorothy showed me a crochet pattern from which I can make more durable chair coverings than those woven things from Brown's shop. The tea was

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abundant and delicious, and the conversation was edifying and cheerful."

"In—deed!" returned the lawyer drily. "And did the minister make love to Miss Dorothy?"

"No, indeed," answered Miss Crowe, in a shocked tone. "He is a very pious, good man."

"And don't pious, good men make love, then? Is that the latest doctrine held by the Wesleyans?"

"I don't mean that exactly," stammered she, in some confusion; her brother usually did confuse her more or less. "But you know, James, Miss Dorothy is engaged to marry Mr. Harold Drayton."

"I know no such thing," snapped the lawyer. Harold Drayton *wanted* to marry her; but that is quite a different thing."

"All the town says she is engaged to him," insisted Miss Sarah timidly.

"All the town says falsely, which is nothing new for it."

"Miss Dalton allowed him to visit her niece when he passed through Drayton this time. Mr. Allgood saw him standing at the gate of their garden with Dorothy."

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"Did the minister see them?"

"Yes, he told me so."

"Ah! very good. He will not be bothering about her, which makes less trouble for me."

Miss Sarah went round the room, and carefully set the antimacassars straight on the several chairs, and moved the sofa back farther against the wall, and then, closing the door softly after her, ascended the stairs slowly to her sleeping apartment. She could hear the sound of the minister's footsteps as he ran lightly down the stairs with his boots: she always wished them left in the kitchen at night, in order that the little girl who came in the mornings to perform various offices might clean them without delay. Then she heard him returning from the kitchen, and he was actually whistling a tune! She was amazed, for he was very quiet as a rule, and she had never heard him whistle. What had made him so unusually cheerful?

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CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

THE spring had deepened into that lovely flush of the early year which is beyond all other seasons in sweetness and in hope. A beautiful, living sunshine streamed all day through the north country woods. Wild blue hyacinths and lilies of the valley bloomed in tufts everywhere; the tender green fronds of the ferns uncurled to new life; and the waters brimmed over in every rivulet's channel, and bubbled under every knot of dock-leaves.

Wending his way along slowly and laboriously, one balmy evening, was old Jerry. The day had been warm, and his load was heavy, and the Peak road which he travelled was rough and uneven. He was near Drayton

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now, and he was glad of it, for he meant to have a night's rest there before proceeding farther. As he passed the home of Miss Dalton he heard the sound of singing from the garden ; sweet, melodious, low-voiced singing, as if the singer was thankful for the warm sunshine and the soft winds. Now, that was rather an unusual sound in the ears of the old pedlar, so he stopped outside the garden gate and listened. He could hear the words plainly, for each one was articulated distinctly.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel : for He hath visited, and redeemed His people ;

And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us : in the house of His servant David ;

As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets : which have been since the world began ;

That we should be saved from our enemies : and from the hands of all that hate us ;

To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers : and to remember His holy covenant ;

To perform the oath which He sware to our forefather Abraham : that He would give us ;

That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies : might serve Him without fear ;

In holiness and righteousness before Him : all the days of our life.

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And thou, Child, shall be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto His people: for the remission of their sins;

Through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;

To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

When the last word had been chanted softly and lingeringly, old Jerry saw Miss Dorothy coming towards him.

"Is it you, Jerry? What have you this evening? It is a long time since you were here."

"Yes, missus, it hev been a longish time sure-ly. Them was pretty words you was singin'. 'Tew guide our feet i' tha way o' peace.' Is that what Christ'll dew for us? I knows summat about Him through having gone tew chapel a time or tew."

"Yes, Jerry. 'To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.'"

"Ah! it's just what Jerry wants main an'bad. I'm a bit dark i' my head, folks sez, an' so I

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be's odd minutes, but not allays. Na, na, not allays."

"Your pack is heavy. Take it down and let me see if I can find anything in it for my use. You shouldn't carry so much with you."

"Bless you," said the old man, as he swiftly unfastened the leather straps of his portable warehouse, "afore I've been half across moor-side I'll hev emptied my pack o' em all, down tew tha littlest spool o' cotton."

"Didn't you tell Miss Keziah you were going to London?"

"So I be, soon. I'm on the road now. I've took a large lot o' things, so as I'll hev silver tew help me along tew Lunnon. I've one belongin' tew me i' Lunnon. M'appen he'll be glad tew see me, an' m'appen he woan't. I sit i' darkness, like the song sez, an' folks doan't take tew my sort."

"Yes, but the song says that Christ came to give you light," said Dorothy softly, as she turned over some tapes and cottons, and selected pins and needles, which she knew would be of use.

"So it dew, missus, an' I'll think o' that whiles; an' m'appen I'll ask Him tew give me light."

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"Do, Jerry, for He always hears us when we ask anything of Him."

"Allays?"

"Yes, always."

"Eh, but that's a fine 'sure-ly.'—I'll rest a bit, an' I may. Tha way's long tew Lunnon town, I'm told, an' I must be ready for a tramp o' miles an' miles."

"I would'nt go, if I were you, Jerry. London is such a busy place, and the people are not over kind. They do not mean to be cruel, but they have to work so hard to gain a living that the weaker go to the wall."

"That's what Missus Keziah sed, an' she's main an' 'cute. But I bean't so weak. I can sell my things right enow, an' I knows the walue o' siller, an' them's tha chiefest points i' this worl', I believe. Oh! I'll dew well enow, na doubt o't."

"Well, I hope so, Jerry, but I cannot think how you like to exchange our lovely roads and woods for big, bare London."

"'Tisn't so bare, missus. Theer's tha shops, an' tha folk, an' plenty o' music i' tha streets; an' if I dew be knocked a bit, that same comes tew one here i' tha country. Now I'll be

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goin', for I must git on a mile or tew afore nightfall. Good even tew you, Miss Dorothy. If I meet any poor souls i' tha big town as wants a mossel o' help, I'll gie it 'em, for Christ's sake, and m'appen He'll guide my feet i' tha way o' peace. Oh! yes, I be's main an' 'cute, like Missus Keziah, 'cause I knows tha walue o' silver, an' I doan't be cheated wi' my goods."

Then he took up his pack, and quitting the garden, continued on his way, a smile which was a mixture of cunning and guilelessness on his lips.

As old Jerry turned his back on Dorothy, Lawyer Crowe approached her from the opposite direction. He came up to the garden gate, and, without waiting for an invitation, entered, and stood beside the girl.

"Aunt is within," she said politely, but with no warmer inflexion in her voice than strict politeness demanded. She had never cared for the society of the lawyer, for he had always seemed to her an untrue man, and one whose moral stature had been stunted before it had time to attain to any very perceptible height.

"I do not wish to see Miss Dalton this

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evening," he returned slowly. "In fact, I have something very particular to say to yourself."

"Will you come into the parlour, then?" She spoke reluctantly, for she had a slight idea of the nature of the lawyer's intended communication. She knew that he purposed some time to ask her to marry him, and she also knew that he was a disagreeable man to oppose or thwart in any way. She tried not to entertain a feeling of enmity against him, but there were days when she felt dimly within herself that he had had something to do with the mystery of Grange Drayton, and that he was the enemy of Harold Drayton, and kept alive the anger of the dying squire against his only child. But all the town respected the lawyer, and he had a flourishing business and a good character. She had no ground for her suspicions, and she often grew ashamed of them, and resolutely put them from her; but, of course, she could not marry him, for she was Harold's promised wife.

"Thank you, I think I will sit down in the parlour for a few minutes. I have had a tiring time with the squire to-day. There is a great deal to be done at Grange Drayton, and I often

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think it too much for one man to attempt. It is a beautiful place, Miss Dorothy, but it requires some money spent on it to make it fit for a lady to dwell in. Do you not think it a fine place?"

Could she have been mistaken as to the lawyer's object in visiting her that evening? "Yes, it is a lovely place," she assented.

"What a pity that the squire has no heir," continued James Crowe. "The townfolk do say that the old squire will reward the services of a faithful friend by leaving the place and all the moneys to him. Of course you know the name of that friend, for, no doubt, you have heard the rumour also. I am not worthy of such a gift, but I trust I shall do my duty when I am master of Grange Drayton. I came this evening to make you an offer of marriage. There is some difference in our ages, certainly, but a man should be older than his wife, for women age in appearance so much more quickly than men. I can make you mistress of Grange Drayton, and give you plenty of money, and unlimited power to spend it. I could, perhaps, obtain a wife in a much higher position of society, but I desire you.

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Now I await with impatience your favourable reply."

"You could not make me mistress of Grange Drayton," exclaimed Dorothy, her astonishment making her overlook all else in the lawyer's speech. "If the child heir be not found, Harold Drayton is the rightful heir. He is the only Drayton now; you are a stranger."

"The property is not entailed, nor bound up in any way. It is completely at the disposal of the squire, and he is about to make a will leaving it to me. There is no doubt that the child is dead; of course, if he was alive I would not take the property. But you have not answered my question. Will you be my wife, and the mistress of Grange Drayton?"

"No, she will not," said Miss Dalton, entering the parlour at that moment. "You spoke so loudly, Lawyer Crowe, that I heard your question as I came along the hall. If she marries any one, it will not be you; and you could not make her mistress of Grange Drayton, because you have nothing to do with the place. You are the law-adviser and

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general steward of the old squire, but you are no Drayton ; and as long as one of the family remains you will not be master there."

"But if none of the family remains, what then?" sneered the lawyer, resolving to remain this time, and vanquish Miss Keziah.

"The squire's second son is alive, and even if the boy heir is dead, Harold is still the old man's son."

"As you are aware that the aforesaid Harold has been disowned by his father for the crime he committed, I cannot understand from whence you obtain the heir. You have not spoken with your usual good sense and clearness, Miss Keziah."

"Harold committed no crime," declared Dorothy vehemently ; "and that you know right well, Mr. Crowe."

For a moment, the lawyer turned pale, and shrank from the girl's accusing eyes. "You speak decidedly, Miss Dorothy. Can you prove your words?"

"I tell you what it is, Lawyer Crowe, I am very doubtful of your honesty," broke in Miss Keziah indignantly. "If Dorothy took my advice, she would marry none of you, for

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there is no man worth the trouble; but certainly she will not marry you. I believe you know more about this affair than we have suspected. You *talk* finely, as most of your sex, but you are a small, mean man inside yourself, and no chapel-going or Christianity would mend you. I have a good mind to go up to Grange Drayton myself, and tell the squire my opinion of the whole matter. You prevented the minister from seeing him, but I am not so easily cheated."

"Do you know that your words are actionable, Miss Keziah," said the lawyer suavely. He was inwardly convulsed with rage and apprehension, but he, when annoyed, always kept his temper outwardly, for he generally found that he had thereby a great advantage over his adversary. With Miss Dalton he scarcely knew what course to pursue. She had such a thorough contempt for him, and was so indifferent to the opinion of men generally, that she was a difficult and strange antagonist.

"Do you really think I fear any action you could take against me?" she questioned, supremest scorn in her tone.

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"My visit was to Miss Dorothy and not to her aunt, so for Miss Dorothy's sake I will try to forget Miss Dalton's ill-advised words."

"I think it would be better to terminate this unpleasant interview," said Dorothy then; for she saw that her aunt was angry, and seemed determined to let Lawyer Crowe know her opinion of his character.

"Well, perhaps it would be wiser," he returned in a quiet voice; "but I will come again to learn your answer, when you have thought over my proposal in your calmer moments. You seem interested in Harold Drayton. If you consider my proposal favourably, I could, perhaps, persuade the old squire to reinstate his son in his good opinion, and condone the offence which he is suspected, on reasonable grounds, of having committed."

With flaming cheeks and flashing eyes, Dorothy opened the parlour door. "You are indeed a wicked man! Go home and repent, before it is too late."

In astonishment, the man took his departure, quickly enough. "The niece is like the aunt, and not a bit meek-spirited, for all

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her chapel-going," he muttered. "It is well for Sarah that her religion has taken a different form from that of Miss Dorothy. I will go back now to the old squire, and make him sign the will at once. I might not be able to keep that woman out of Grange Drayton."

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CHAPTER VII.

MISS KEZIAH'S VISIT TO GRANGE DRAYTON.

"DON'T go, Aunt Keziah. Where is the use of it? The old man will not see you, and we don't care who possesses the place if only Harold could be freed from the taint of crime."

"No, we don't care about the place, it is true; but, child, your Harold will never be set right so long as the lawyer has it all his own way. I will say nothing about the lawyer at all, for I can *prove* nothing against him; but I will try to show the squire that his judgment might have been at fault when he accused Harold of that crime. I will try to make him think the matter over again. Not that I expect to succeed in my mission. Yes, I will walk up there now; very likely James

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Crowe has gone home, for it is late to trouble the poor old squire with business."

"Lawyer Crowe said he had been with the squire to-day."

"Ah! well, he will have gone home, no doubt. I hope Miss Sarah will give him a good cup of tea after this exciting interview. I don't fancy he had the best of it, my dear. Why, even you turned on him at last. I wonder of what use such a creature as he is?"

"He might have been a good, noble man, but evil obtained the mastery over him."

"My dear Dorothy, nothing will reform a small, mean, crooked nature. Your Christianity can do nothing for such a one. He might go to chapel, think he was converted, say Amen the loudest, and pray the longest, but, all the same, he would be a morally small man. You would think him a Christian, perhaps, and be perplexed in endeavouring to reconcile some of his actions with his professions, but I—a sinner—would not call him a Christian. Ah! we unconverted folk are very sharp, and can quickly detect a sham. You Christians have need to follow more closely the *spirit* of your Christ's teach-

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ing. Do not put all your trust in prayer-meetings and sermons; talk less of one another's faults and failings; and stretch out a helping hand whenever it is wanted. I don't mean to say anything against you, child. Your Christianity would tempt me to try and understand it and profess it; yes, and Mr. Allgood is your sort, too, and a big man morally and mentally, despite his absurd name. There, I am preaching a sermon when I should be on my road to the Grange. Good even to you for the present."

With resolute step, Miss Dalton took her way along the fair country road to Grange Drayton. She soon arrived there, and finding a small door in the side wall unfastened, which was an almost unprecedented thing, she entered unannounced, and passed up the wide front avenue. The blinds of the house were all down, and it seemed as if no one dwelt there, so desolate and uncared-for was the aspect of the building. "Just like Miss Sarah Crowe's parlour," she thought, as she stood still and meditated as to the best manner of effecting an entrance. If she knocked at the hall-door, a servant would

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tell her the master received no visitors, and she would be obliged to go away as she had come. Yet she could scarcely enter the sick-chamber of the old squire alone and unannounced. Ah! he was not confined to bed. She had forgotten that he sat in an invalid's chair in a little parlour on the second floor during the daytime, although he *was* supposed to be dying. It was yet early, so he could not have gone to bed; she would try to see him alone in that room.

She went round to the side of the house, and discovered there also, to her great astonishment, a little door half open; some one had evidently gone through it hurriedly and forgotten to close it. She promptly pushed it wider open and passed through, finding herself in a narrow passage which led to the centre hall. She walked on quickly and noiselessly, and ascended the great wide stairs. "A nice unprotected way to leave such a house as this in," she murmured. "That man is not worth much if he does not have better care taken of the place than this. How angry Harold would be could he know how easy it is to get into the house."

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She proceeded rapidly along the corridor, until she came to the door of the room she wanted. Then she paused irresolutely for a moment, hesitated, and finally knocked sharply with the handle of her umbrella. A voice, which she recognised immediately, bade her enter. She walked in and saw the old squire in an arm-chair, propped up by pillows, and beside him at a table Lawyer Crowe sat, pen in hand.

"How on earth did you get here?" exclaimed the lawyer, surprised for once out of his usual cautious manner of speech, while the squire raised himself on his pillows and stared at her.

"No doubt you are angry and amazed at seeing me," she answered; "but this visit is intended for Squire Drayton; I did not particularly desire your presence. It is easy enough for any tramp to walk into the house and help himself to whatever he likes; two doors are invitingly open to render the entrance easy. If I were you, Squire Drayton, I would order a faithful servant to see after the locking-up of the house and outside gates, and not leave everything to your lawyer. You give the poor man too

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much to do. You will be robbed right and left as a reward for so acting. Do you recollect me? I am Keziah Dalton, aunt to Dorothy Dalton, whom your son Harold wanted to marry."

"Yes, I recollect you now. Will you be seated?"

"No, thank you. I have not much to say, but I mean to say it. Your son Harold was accused falsely of a crime. He is now suffering for what he never did, and the worst of it is, he doesn't suffer alone. My niece still clings to him, although I would be only too glad if she would give him up. You know she has plenty of her own money, and I have plenty more; so I have no motive in coming here to plead Harold Drayton's cause. It would be a joyful day for me if she would give him up; but as she will not do so, I have come to say a word to you on the matter. Had you decided *proofs* of your son's guilt? Remember that hints and suspicions are not proofs. If you took my advice, you would recall your son and produce the proofs of his guilt, and listen to what he has to say for himself. It will be no particular pleasure to me

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to have him cleared, for Dorothy and he will marry then; but he is a good man, and, perhaps, the best of his kind; so when she will marry, she may as well have the best. I fear that Lawyer Crowe influenced you against your son."

"I was fully convinced of his guilt when I turned him out."

"No doubt you were, but that does not prove that your conviction was correct. We are often fully convinced of what really is an error."

A faint smile curved the thin lips of the old man. "I do not believe you had any interested motive in coming here to-day, Miss Keziah, for I used to know you some years ago, and I remember you. At the same time, I may tell you your trouble has been for nothing. I cannot alter my decision now. As to Lawyer Crowe, he has served me for many years faithfully and well, and I would not lightly listen to any accusations against him."

"Oh! I make no accusations against him, and I did not expect that you would seriously act upon any words of mine concerning him,

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or I should not have come. I do not want to injure the man without being able to say that I *know* of what I accuse him. I have showed that it is possible you might have been mistaken in your judgment. If James Crowe had not been here before me, very likely I should never have mentioned him; for I do not believe in insinuations, or in blows in the dark."

"Well, you have had your say," murmured the old man feebly, "and I am very tired. I am a dying man, Miss Keziah, and a small thing wearies me."

She turned away at once, and quitted the apartment without another word. She was very sorry for the poor, lonely old squire, although she would not have owned it to herself, and she began to wonder if she had acted wisely after all. He had been very much agitated by the interview, and perhaps it would work him serious injury. It was not always well to act on the impulse of the moment, however right it might appear.

When she had closed the small side door after her, the lawyer went downstairs and watched her from a window until she had

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disappeared through the gate out into the road beyond. Then he fastened securely both means of entrance, and returned upstairs to the sitting-room of the squire.

"You must be more careful, Crowe," said the old man feebly. "How did it happen that Miss Dalton obtained an entrance, when no servant admitted her?"

"I am very sorry," murmured the lawyer, apologetically. "I must have left both doors unfastened this evening when I came in. I always come by those doors, for, as I have the keys of them, it saves a servant the trouble of answering my summons, and saves my time also."

"Have you dismissed all the servants?"

"Oh no; you have Simmons and his wife in the house, and the usual outdoor hands."

There was silence for a few minutes; then James Crowe glanced uneasily at the document resting on the table, the perusal of which had been interrupted by the unexpected visit of Miss Dalton. He coughed once or twice, but the old man took no notice of the sound, lying the while, with closed eyes, back against the cushions of his chair.

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Evidently Mistress Keziah's talk had totally upset his nerves—for that night, at least. What was to be done? And he would have signed the will half-an-hour ago, and all might have been well. It was growing late. Ought he to be reminded of what he had consented to do? He looked very ill and worn now; he might not live until morning.

Half-an-hour passed in complete silence, save for the occasional movements of the lawyer; then John Drayton opened his eyes and sighed. He started when he perceived that he was not alone.

"You here, Crowe? I thought you had gone to your home. I have been thinking of this place six years ago. How different it was then, and how different still thirty years ago, when my wife lived! Ah! James Crowe, old age can be a very lonely time. You had better ring for Simmons, and help him to carry me to my bedroom in the chair. I am very poorly to-night."

"That woman annoyed you," answered the lawyer sympathetically.

"She did, and she did not, if you can understand such a contradictory statement.

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What is that on the table? Yes, my will. I won't sign it to-night. One should not hastily give away an inheritance that has belonged to one family for more than a century."

"Of course there is no hurry," returned James Crowe in a low voice; "only I thought you would have been more comfortable had the matter been settled finally. The words of that woman will not influence you against me? I have always served you faithfully, and to the best of my ability. If I have failed in anything, it has been unintentional."

"Yes, yes, you have served me well; but—I have paid you well. There, let us cease our talking for to-night. I will not sign that at present. Here comes Simmons."

James Crowe walked along the road that led to Drayton in no very pleasant frame of mind. All would have been arranged to his satisfaction that night but for the untimely interference of Miss Dalton. How sharp and keen-witted she was, and how lamentably outspoken and fearless. She should have been a man; then, perhaps, he could have managed to silence her. What was to be done? Certainly she would never obtain

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admittance to Grange Drayton again. As to Dorothy—well, she might marry Harold Drayton if she wished, but a husband with a tarnished name would not be much of an acquisition.

When he entered the parlour in West Street, Miss Sarah had just washed up the tea things and put them away in the cupboard.

"You might have waited for me," he said, half angrily. "I want my tea now."

"But, brother, you told me never to wait for you when you were not back in time for it. To-night you are quite two hours late. The minister was also late, or I would have had the table cleared long ago."

"Don't stop to argue with me, if you please, but make me a cup of tea. Mind that it *is* tea, and not shaded water."

Miss Sarah went away to the kitchen without further remark, and set the kettle on the fire to boil.

"Now, I shall not get any work done to-night, and I could not go to the prayer meeting because the minister was kept so long with that dying woman beyond Ashbourn. Dear, oh! dear, what worries there are,

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to be sure. James has evidently been much annoyed to-night. I wonder why it is that when folk are irritated and vexed outside their houses, they wreak their displeasure on the home people, who have done nothing to anger them."

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE PEDLAR OF THE PEAK IN LONDON.

THE din, the tumult, the gas-glare, the wild uproar of the London streets, confused and frightened Jerry, the old pedlar, as he wandered hither and thither in seach of his relative, some months after his interview with Dorothy Dalton. He had been a week already in the great city, and he wished himself back again in safety in his Peak country. He wondered, as many another has done, how the poor people lived, and breathed, and endured existence in such holes.

Hundreds of small houses crowding on one another; storey on storey mounting to the murky, smoke-veiled heaven; the stench of candle, and soap, and bone-boiling factories steaming over all; the only light the flare of

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the yellow gas through the leaden fog, on faces haggard with misery, hideous with crime, or death-like with starvation.

"I was a fule tew come tew Lunnon," he muttered despairingly, as he crossed Blackfriars Bridge, and travelled laboriously on, leaving busy, bewildering Ludgate Circus behind him. "I niver know'd till now how much I hev tew thank God for i' being country born an' bred. They's all stifled here—just stifled. Th' air's all smoke an' reek; an' tha winds is all pison; an' whin you look up'ards theer's a great black hand a-stretchin' far o'er atween you an' tha sun. Theer bean't a mossel o' grass as *is* grass; theer bean't a leaf as doan't look sick an' swounded; theer bean't a bird as dew sing; not a child as dew laugh: tha birds fight, and the childer screech. They's all jammed tewgither like turf-sods whin you pack 'em close; theer's allays a horrible noise i' their ears, an' a horrible stench i' their nostrils. How should they grow up decent an' God-fearin' like, whin they niver sees tha blue sky, nor smells a flower as is blowin', nor feels tha sweet country air i' their faces?"

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He walked on, and shuddered as he walked, although he could not comprehend fully the misery of the grey, dust-strewn tenements; the tawdry frightfulness of the few attempts at ornaments; the ghastly tumult of the choked streets—choked with thieves, and beggars, and ballad-singers, and wretched horses starving in the last years of age, and ghoul-like infants quarrelling with the poor stray dogs for mouldy crusts and decayed meat-bones.

He at last turned down a street that some one told him was the one he sought. There was a row of tall, crowded houses all alike, and all hemmed in on one another, with gas glimmering on either side, and stalls of horrible-scented fish, of coffee, and of oranges standing down the narrow way, with little oil-lamps flaring above them under shades, and miserable children gathering round.

At the further end, quite away from the busy thoroughfare, was a small shop, with old clothes and some old china in its solitary window. The house in which it was stood four stories high; tall, narrow, and very shabby in appearance. Behind the counter

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sat an old man, with spectacles on his nose, and a black cap on his bald head.

"What do you want?" this old man asked, in his thin, quavering voice, when Jerry entered the shop and stood looking at him. "Ah! you are a pedlar, I see. I don't *buy* old clothes, but I sell them."

"I'm Jeremiah Anderson, tha pedlar o' tha Peak, an' your brother," Jerry made reply. "Doan't you remember me?"

"As I haven't seen you for fifty years, and we are only half-brothers, I think it is no wonder I had forgotten you."

"Is't fifty years agone that you was i' tha Peak land? I wonder howiver you live i' this horrid hole. It'd take tha life o' me, an I was i' your stead."

"What brought you here, then?" queried the other, impatiently.

"I thought as Lunnon was tha greatest place i' tha worl', wheer money a'most grow'd, an' wheer tha coins'd come tew me quick like; an' so I must see it. I've been here a bit now, an' I wish I was home agin; I was a born fule tew come. But 'sperience teaches, as they sez i' tha chapel. Though you're

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not ower glad tew see me—as why should you be?—I'd like tew rest a night wi' you, an' go on i' tha mornin'. I can pay tha siller for my bed."

"Yes, of course you can stay," returned old Anderson quickly, at the mention of payment. "I am always busy, and my rooms are very full of articles, but if you can manage to sleep on the bed of the boy Nat, you will not be uncomfortable. I'll call him, and he'll see to you."

Nat responded slowly to his master's summons, and stood silently staring at the pedlar.

"Take this man, and give him something to eat and drink, and make your bed for him. You can lie on one of the rugs in your attic for to-night. Go with the boy, Jeremiah; he will attend to you."

The pedlar followed his silent conductor into the dark little parlour behind the shop, where a small fire burned in the grate, and the remnants of a loaf of bread and some bacon yet remained on the table.

"Will you sit down, and put away your bundle, and I'll make you a cup of tea? Are

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those things more articles to be tied up and placed on the shelves upstairs?"

"This here's my pack, little boy. I'm tha pedlar Jerry, o' tha Peak, an' I sells tha things i' this pack. Love-ly things I hev gotten i' tha pack. Would you like tew see 'em, little boy?"

"Not now," responded Nat, gravely. "By-and-bye, when you have taken your tea, we will go up to the rooms, and then you can show me them."

Before the meal was over the boy Nat and the childish old man were friends, Nat explaining in his solemn fashion all about the "articles" in the rooms above, and all about the little, audacious mice.

"Somethin's a-puzzlin' my wits," said Jerry, as he slowly mounted the steep stairs, when the meal was concluded. "Not as I hev much wits tew puzzle; but still—I believe as I hev set eyes on you afore now, little boy."

"Have you shining, coloured things in your pack?" asked Nat, with a faint show of eagerness.

"He means tha jew'llery.—Yes, I hev so; rare and love-ly brooches an' things."

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"I think I saw you before I was pawned. It was one day when I was with mother in some country place. But, look! There's the bed you are to sleep on, and I'm to lie here beside you on the floor. Oh! I'll be well enough, for there's plenty of rugs in the rooms, and I can take enough of them for to-night to make me a soft bed. Now, you can sit down on that box there, and show me the things in your pack, and, after, I'll show you the articles in the rooms. Some of them are not nice, but there's some that are fresh and bright, just like the articles you have there. I'm sorrier for the bright articles than for the faded, old ones. But I forgot. Your things are not *articles*, because they are not pawned."

Jerry remained more than that night with Joseph, his half-brother. He had a bad cough, and pains in his limbs from much walking; so he stayed on in his attic-chamber, in order to recover his strength somewhat, although he was longing to be back again in the old Peak country.

During those days Nat and he had many conversations, and, although the boy had led

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such a roving life, and had not dwelt always in England, the old pedlar told him many a story of Derbyshire that excited in him interest, and even pleasure, such as he had never felt before in all the stupid, monotonous, poverty-filled days that he had lived. He seemed never to have remained outside towns long enough to perceive or feel any of the real charm of a country life. He had passed through the Peak land, as he said, but he had had no recollection of it beyond the fact that "his mammy" had been more shaky in her manner of walking than usual, and more loud-voiced and hasty in her speech. He had then to keep close by her side, he explained to Jerry, or she would have fallen into the streams, or hurt herself against the stones on the roads. She often did injure herself, certainly, because he was not strong enough or quick always to save her. When she walked so unsteadily, a push on one side would set her straight, and then, when she rolled over on the other side too far, a pull back again would serve the same purpose. It was a pity he was so small and weak, for he was not of very much use in reality.

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Oh! yes, he generally had enough to eat, but they frequently slept in the streets, under the arches of the bridges, or in quiet corners. He sometimes thought of her now, it was true; but he supposed he was better off here, and she wanted the money. She never struck him or spoke unkindly to him, and the pawnbroker was like her in that way; but there was shelter here always, and enough to eat and drink, so he did not think he would wish "his mammy" to come with the money and the ticket for his release.

Of course he never played in the streets, or shouted with laughter, as the other boys near by did; but he had no particular wish to share in their sports, for they fought very often, and did not seem to be happy, though their laughter *was* loud. He went out for bread, and bacon, and cheese, and other eatables for the pawnbroker; but he never desired to remain long in the streets, for he had had so much wandering up and down them.

"What dew you dew wi' yourself all tha day?" inquired the pedlar one evening, when Nat had been silently watching the games

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of two little mice, who played quite close to him.

"Some days I'm kept busy dusting and cleaning the rooms, for it takes a long while to unpin all those bundles, and shake them and fold them up tidily again. Other days I sit and watch those two little mice there. I think they must know me quite well, for I break up bits of bread for them, and anything that is left from the meals, and they come and eat it. You know I have to set traps in all the other rooms, and try and kill the mice, because of the bundles; but this is my place, and there are no bundles here, so I can let those two little things live. I talk to them sometimes, and they sit up close together and twinkle their bright eyes at me, as if they heard me quite well. I'm afraid of the mice in the other rooms, they're so big and so many, and make such a noise racing about and squealing. Sometimes I think how dreadful it would be if they all got together and came into my place here, and ran over me, and nipped me with their sharp teeth. I should die, then, from fear."

"Tha mice isn't sensible bein's. They'd

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niver think o' sech a thing. You'd better come back along o' me tew tha Peak, an' I'll gie you tew a good lady theer, call't Miss Dorothy, an' she'll hev a care o' you. She's main an' good, aye, an' love-ly tew, an' she's allays kind tew ole Jerry. I'm a-goin' soon now, and you might come wi' me. I hevn't much sense, but I knows as you oughtn't tew be livin' so lone like; 'tisn't right for a little 'un like you. Why, tha boys i' my country play i' tha sunshine most part o' tha day, an' tha little gells they meks daisy chains, or cowslip balls, an' laughs an' sings, as'd dew you good tew hear."

"Don't they go to school, then?"

"Tew be sure they does, but that on'y meks tha play-time all tha sweeter. Dew you niver go tew school, here?"

"No; I'm always too busy."

"That's a shame, thin. I hev a mind tew tell Joseph as he's not doin' right by you, a-lettin' you grow up wi'out tha buke learnin'. He'd be med send you tew school if 'twas know'd. Well, well, I winna meddle. It's niver na good a-threshin' ither folks' corn; you allays gits tha flail agin i' your own eye,

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somehow. But will you come home wi' me, little boy?"

"No, I couldn't, although I think I'd like it. I must stay until mammy comes back and pays the money for me. She has pawned me regular, and I must stay here, the same as those bundles on the shelves, until I am released."

"'Tis strange an' queer, sure-ly," muttered the old man; "but a'most all's strange an' queer i' this Lunnon! The poverty's queer, whin there's heaps an' heaps o' siller, an' tha ways o' livin' is queer, an' most o't all is tha queerness o' tha folks theirselves. Well-a-day! I'll be gone wi' tha morn, an' if iver you hes a chance tew live i' tha country, tek it, poor little boy. Now, I'll tell you what Miss Dorothy was singin' just afore I left tha Peak. Mebbe 't will comfort you a bit, for sure-ly you sit i' darkness. You hev heard o' Christ? I did tew, 'cause I went chapel-ways a time or tew. But I didn't know as He is to gie light tew them as sit i' darkness an' i' the shadow o' death, tew guide our feet i' tha way o' peace. Miss Dorothy, she said He allays hears us when we ask anythin' o' Him, an'

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she's main an' good, an' o' course she asked Him tew mek her that. All folks isn't good, by na means; so she must hev asked special. Dew you ask special tew be guided i' tha way o' peace, an' tew hev light i' tha darkness; an' you'll hev it, sure-ly."

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CHAPTER IX.

LAWYER CROWE'S CHARITABLE DEED.

ONE dark night, a week after the departure of the pedlar, as Nat was brushing the shop, before helping to put up the shutters, the woman he called "mammy" hastily entered.

"Here, old Anderson," she cried shrilly; "here is your ticket and your money back again, with the interest. Oh! you needn't stare. It's good gold, not stolen, but honestly gained. A friend of mine, a lawyer down in the country, has paid me what he owes me at last, and I'm well off. I've lots of gold now. Don't you want some more of it, old man?"

Yes, Joseph Anderson certainly did want some more of it, and he thought it was a

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great pity that it should be wasted on drunken Matilda Drayton. But he was not particularly glad to see his own money back again on the counter. He wished to keep Nat. The boy had grown so useful to him, and was so quiet and stupid, that he was worth twice that number of gold pieces.

"What do you want the boy for? You have no love for him, although you are his mother, and he is not sensible enough to earn money to support you. He's useful to me. Leave him, and take back that money, and I'll add a couple more sovereigns into the bargain."

"Ha! Didn't I tell you that you'd find him useful? Oh no; *I* want him now! If I didn't take him away from you now, I'd lose him. That lawyer who gave me the money got out of me where I had left the boy, and very likely he'll come and see after him. I suppose I was drunk at the time—*really* drunk, I mean—just as I was when I did that other foolish thing."

"You're always drunk, I believe," returned the pawnbroker, contemptuously. "If you were not so now, you would leave the boy, and

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take all that money for him, which will be much more useful to you than ever he will be."

"It is because I am sober, perfectly sober, that I am taking him away.—Come, child! or yonder old man will try and keep you. I'm stronger yet than he is; but still, he might call in the neighbours, and tell them some untruth about you, and have me turned away."

Reluctantly Nat put his brush aside, and placed his hand in the one stretched out to him. He had no desire to go with Mrs. Drayton, for he had grown almost contented with his quiet, monotonous life. To have food and drink, and a bed to lie upon, were benefits he knew how to appreciate; and, as he did not understand what affection meant, he would rather have remained in his present home.

"I believe the boy will be sorry to go," said Anderson, quickly. "Leave him, and I will give you the money back three times over."

"Not if you gave it to me a hundred times over, old Anderson. Ha! ha! old miser: so

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you'd waste your money. Fie on you! Be true to yourself and your calling, and keep it to cheat some one else. I'm delaying here, when I should be home in my lodgings. Good-night, old Anderson. Perhaps I'll make you a call some other evening."

She quitted the shop hastily, and walked rapidly down the street, almost dragging Nat along.

"We're going to comfortable lodgings this time, child, for I spoke truth when I said I had money."

The streets were crowded, as they generally are in that part of London, and the boy grew bewildered with the noise, and the glare, and the rapid steps of the woman,

"Why are you delaying?" she demanded, impatiently. "I want to get under cover soon. It's nothing new to you to walk in a hurry through the streets of a town. Have you grown more stupid from living with the old pawnbroker? Let us cross over here. There aren't so many cars."

"Take care, mammy! You were nearly under that horse's feet."

"Never fear, child. I'll be all right."

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At that moment a cab, driven at a violent pace, knocked the woman down, the wheels passing over her. A crowd collected immediately, but the vehicle proceeded on its way after a slight pause, and was soon lost to sight. The boy Nat was quite unhurt, and he stood looking down on the prostrate body in a sort of stupefied amazement.

A gentleman, who had been standing on the opposite pavement when the accident happened, now pushed his way through the crowd, and announced to the policeman that he was a friend of the injured woman. He directed her removal to the nearest hospital, and said that he would take charge of her son until the doctors had decided on her case. He went to the hospital, and leaving his card with the authorities there, desired that word should be sent to him of her in the morning.

The following morning he received a message to the effect that she was unconscious, and that she would probably remain so until she died. When the nurses found that there was little hope of her recovery, they had asked her if she wished to see her son, and

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she had replied that she preferred to die alone.

Upon receipt of that message, the gentleman went to the hospital and, after a visit there of about half-an-hour, returned to his hotel and told the boy that his mother was dead, and that henceforth he would take care of him.

Nat took scarcely any notice of his new protector. Recent events had been so unexpected, and his "mammy's" death so sudden and so awful, that he felt as one in a dream, from which the awakening would be a relief. His heart was not filled with sorrow, and he was not lonely or unusually miserable, when he found himself beside Lawyer Crowe in a railway carriage, many miles from London. But his existence had been so monotonous in its uncomfortable poverty, that this sudden change bewildered him, and seemed strange and unaccountable.

* * * * *

"Of whatever could James have been thinking, to bring me a boy to take care of—a young, ignorant boy? Why, he will eat and drink enough for two ministers and his

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clothes will always need mending. I must get much more money for housekeeping now. I could'nt possibly manage on what I have. I'll just tell James my mind, now while I'm angry. In my cooler moments, his quiet way frightens and silences me. I'm glad the minister has gone to lodge with Mrs. Granger. I wonder why James suggested his doing so? He *said* the place would be healthier for Mr. Allgood, but he had some other reason, I am sure. Ah! here he comes! Now for a quarrel, I am afraid."

"Well, Sarah, has that boy taken kindly to his new surroundings? Poor little fellow, he is an orphan! I knew you would think it no trouble to have him in the house—women are so kind-hearted; and now that the minister is gone, he will fill his place."

Miss Sarah was somewhat mollified by these remarks, but still she resolved to have a clear understanding regarding money matters.

"So far he is very quiet and silent, but he has been here only a few hours You must give me more money to supply the table, and he will need some clothes, for he is very

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shabby. His mother was very wrong to allow him to go about in that state."

"His mother was very poor, and she is dead," returned the lawyer solemnly.

Miss Sarah was silent for a minute, abashed by her brother's manner, as he meant she should be. Then he said, still in a grave tone of voice—

"I will continue the allowance I made when the minister was with us, and here are five pounds to provide an entirely new outfit for the poor little orphan. I am not a religious man, Sarah, as you know; but I will try and do my best for the child of my dead friend."

At that moment Miss Sarah thought her brother a good, kind man indeed. In her heart, she always believed him to be very upright and honest in his thoughts and actions; but now she felt sincerest admiration and respect for him. She would tell the neighbours of this kind, charitable deed of his, and surely they would all think as she did on the subject.

"I am afraid he cannot read or write," the lawyer went on, in the same grave, pitying tone; "so it would be better if you could

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manage to teach him something before I send him to school. The other boys would laugh at him for being so ignorant, for at his age most boys can read and write fairly well."

"Yes, I will try and teach him," promised Miss Crowe eagerly; "and I will go to the shop of Ambrose Brown and buy him plenty of clothing both for inside and outside wear."

"You will make him respectable, I am sure, Sarah. If the neighbours ask any questions, you may tell them he is the child of my dead friend; for I do not wish to have any secrecy about it. I would rather not allow him to accept the invitations of any friends, and I think it would be advisable to go with him always when he takes his daily walk. He is ignorant and has been very poor, and he might shock the good folk of Drayton."

Then James Crowe left the little front parlour, and took his hat and set out for Grange Drayton, well satisfied with his conversation with Miss Sarah. He knew that his directions would be strictly carried out, and that she would speak very sincerely in his praise to every one. For all his boasting to the con-

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trary, he did like to stand well with his neighbours, and latterly the townsfolk had looked coldly on him, no doubt incited thereto by Miss Dalton's sharp tongue. As he walked along the country road, he felt pleased with himself and all the world.

"No one would recognise the boy," he thought, as he neared Grange Drayton. "Why, I would not know him myself. His hair used to be quite fair, and his eyes were certainly of a deep blue colour. This boy is thin and worn-looking, his hair is very dark brown, and his eyes seem to me to be grey. Then, he has become so stupid and silent, and, indeed, rather odd. I would never take him to be the same child, even allowing for the difference the years must have made in his appearance. Oh, yes! he may safely go about the town."

Meanwhile, Miss Sarah called Nat down from his room, and talked gently and kindly to him, and tried to make him talk in return.

"I am going to buy you new clothes, dear and you shall learn to read and write. Will, not that be nice?"

"Yes, I suppose it will," he answered in-

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differently, while he glanced round the room inquiringly. He knew the misery of being hungry, but his scanty clothing had never caused him any inconvenience; so he was not overjoyed at Miss Crowe's words.

"You are a strange boy! I thought boys were noisy and talkative. Are you always so silent?"

"I don't know. I never talked much to any one. Mammy didn't talk to me, and the pawnbroker hadn't time and the bundles couldn't do so."

Then his eyes fell upon a little heap of antimacassars lying in a work basket to be mended.

"Am I pawned again, and is this one of the rooms?" he inquired of the astonished Miss Sarah. "That's a bundle lying on the basket, isn't it? And all those white things hanging out on the chairs are articles that have been pawned. You shouldn't leave them out in the dust; if you don't keep them clean they will not bring so much money at the end of the year. Your room is not so dark as old Anderson's, nor so dirty, but perhaps you have only one. Still it's dark enough, and those

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chairs are very old and worn. Are they pawned, too? *They* won't bring much money, I'm afraid, they're so very worn and dirty; old Anderson would say so. Maybe you're pawned yourself, for your dress is not nice and bright and new?"

He spoke slowly and musingly, more as if he were stating ordinary facts than as if he were asking questions; and all the while he was taking note of every object in the room. When Miss Crowe did not answer him—her bewilderment and indignation were so great—he moved across to the row of chairs against the wall.

"May I roll up these white things and pin them together? They will keep cleaner than if they are left out."

"Don't touch them," she screamed out then, recovering herself by a great effort. "You are not pawned, child. How could such a strange idea enter your head? People don't pawn children. You have come to live with me and my brother, and we are going to educate you, and make you a good, respectable boy. Don't let anyone hear you talking about being pawned, or they will think you light-

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headed. Dear, dear! where has the child lived?"

"I was pawned," persisted Nat, gravely; "and this room is so like old Anderson's parlour that I thought perhaps I was pawned again. Are you sure I am not? But old Anderson didn't talk to me the way you do, and he didn't say he'd teach me to read; so I suppose I'm not pawned."

"Dear, dear!" repeated Miss Sarah, in much perturbation of spirit.

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CHAPTER X.

"TO GUIDE OUR FEET INTO THE WAY OF PEACE."

FOR a week or two her brother's "charitable deed" was a cause of great anxiety and perplexity to Miss Sarah. She had never been brought into actual contact with children, but she had theories about them; and because Nat was so unlike the noisy, healthy children of the townsfolk, she concluded that he was either ill or "not quite right in his head." She wanted to carry out the wishes of James concerning the boy; but she found it a much more difficult matter than she imagined it would be. She never could tell whether she had given him pleasure or not; and when she took him into the town, and pointed out to him the pretty things in the shop-windows, or brought him to the

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Wesleyan chapel to hear the singing, he would answer all her questions by saying that he saw many grander things in London, and heard much finer music there.

Then, the idea of his comparing the sitting-room in West Street to a pawnbroker's parlour! As if those carefully-arranged, antimacassar-covered chairs *could* bear any resemblance to such a place! Miss Sarah's feelings were hurt, severely hurt; but yet she did not feel anger against Nat.

She was parsimonious, and counted her saved pennies as a miser would his gold; but she laid out nearly all her brother's allowance in buying food which she believed ought to make the boy grow fat and happy-looking. So much did he occupy her thoughts, that she had scarcely time for her usual work. She would almost have invited one of Ambrose Brown's noisy, red-cheeked boys to come and play with Nat, in order to make him laugh and chatter as other children, but she feared her brother would not like it.

One day, a month after Nat's arrival in West Street, Dorothy Dalton met Miss Crowe in the town. The lawyer's sister had felt

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kindly disposed towards Dorothy ever since the evening of that tea-party when she had learned to crochet a new antimacassar; and Dorothy was always gentle-voiced, and there never issued from her lips the two-edged, stinging remarks peculiar to her aunt, Mistress Keziah.

"How do you and your young charge get on, Miss Sarah?" asked Dorothy, as she turned and walked with Miss Sarah towards her home.

"Not very well. I don't understand children. It is so long since my own childhood, that I forget all about it. He is such a strange boy. I may tell you, in confidence, that he compared my sitting-room to a pawnbroker's parlour, and thought that my antimacassars were articles pawned. Indeed, he asked me if I was not myself pawned. He has not yet got the strange fancy out of his head, for I see him go towards the chairs as if he would fold up their covers and put them away."

"What an odd idea!" said Dorothy, much interested in Miss Sarah's words. "I noticed that he was very thin and pale, and seemed

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very quiet. He may have had something to do with a pawnbroker's shop."

"But the strange thing is that he insists that he himself was pawned. I don't like to hear him say so, for I fear then that he is light-headed."

"I shouldn't be very much amazed if such a thing had happened to him in London It is not at all impossible. Remember London is not like our quiet Drayton."

"I am so glad to hear you speak so,' returned Miss Crowe, in a relieved voice. "Now I shall trouble myself about his odd ways and speech no more. He is very silent, as you say, and Drayton itself seems to give him no pleasure."

"Perhaps he is tired of town, and would enjoy the country."

"He would *enjoy* nothing, I think; but I have not yet taken him beyond Drayton."

"Let him come to me this evening, and I will see what can be done to make him smile and talk."

Now, the lawyer's sister was embarrassed. James told her not to permit Nat to accept any invitations to the houses of the neigh-

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bours. He would, perhaps, make an exception in favour of Miss Dorothy, for he knew she was not given to gossip.

"Thank you, I will bring him as far as your house this evening, but we will not remain to tea. You can notice him then, and advise me about him. Poor little chap! I am so anxious to make him happy, and to serve him, but I don't know how to do it."

Then Miss Sarah went home and made Nat ready, and started with him for Miss Dalton's abode. It was a warm summer day. The drowsy bees hummed over the countless flowers; the white and rose heaths covered the turf with a maze of soft colour; the limestone rock flushed under the glowing rays of the sun.

The brightness and the colour all around him seemed to please the boy, and the bees and butterflies attracted his attention and unloosed his tongue. But Miss Crowe could not answer many of his questions, for she was as ignorant of country sights and sounds as if she had been town-born and town-bred.

"Why, Dorothy, I do believe I see Miss

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Sarah Crowe and that boy they have adopted coming towards our gate. Now, I will not have children about the place, and I like nothing in connection with the lawyer. Don't encourage her to come here with the child. Evidently James Crowe keeps his secrets from his sister; if he told her a few of them, she would not come here, I'm thinking."

"Receive her kindly, please, aunt, for my sake. She is only coming as far as the garden to try and enliven the dull existence of that poor little boy."

"I believe you, it *is* a dull existence for him in West Street, with those two miserable old people. But, if Miss Sarah knows it is dull for him, why does she not brighten herself and her surroundings?"

"She does not know how to do so," answered Dorothy sadly. "She is doing her best, but she says she has had no success as yet. Here they come!"

Dorothy held out her hand to Nat and led him off to the back garden, leaving Miss Sarah to be entertained by Miss Dalton. There were so many wonderful and pretty things to be seen in that garden, and so many

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questions to have answered, and so many stories to hear, that Nat forgot all about the pawnbroker and his rooms in London.

For the first time, the stalls of decayed fish, of oranges, of bad coffee and stale buns, and the flaring oil-lamps round which the wretched children crouched, quitted his mind, and he ceased to think of them for that half-hour which he spent in Miss Dalton's sweet, old-world garden. The perfume of the mignonette and lavender and the gay colouring of the roses soothed and delighted him, and the song of a bird high up in a tree amazed him. He could not understand why the bird should sing so gaily, for even he comprehended that there was no undercurrent of sadness in the strain. Dorothy told him that she thought the bird must be saying what a sweet, beautiful world it was, and how good God was to have created it in such lovely fashion. Nat pondered over that reply; then he seemed satisfied with it, for he looked up with renewed interest at the singer.

"Tell Miss Sarah all about the garden and the bird when you go home," said Dorothy, as she gave him fruit and flowers for a remem-

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brance of his visit. "She will like to hear, for she lives in a town, too, you know, and she does not often come out into the country."

On the way home he did talk freely to Miss Sarah, to her delighted astonishment, relating all that he had seen and heard; and he shared his fruit and flowers with her.

The great bunches of roses and mignonette and the sprigs of sweet-smelling lavender changed the aspect of the parlour in West Street so completely, that it seemed no longer dingy and hopeless-looking; and when Miss Sarah pinned a little bunch of wallflower into her black dress, she, too, assumed a festive appearance. Nat quite forgot to think of "bundles" and "articles," and the sweet, soft breath of summer transformed him also. He felt a sudden desire to learn to read quickly, in order that he might tell to himself other pretty tales such as Miss Dorothy had related in the garden under the fruit trees.

Miss Sarah often took him into the country after that memorable visit to Miss Dalton's garden, and she taught him to read and to write; and, although he was always graver and more silent than boys of his age usually

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are, he often laughed, and he talked to Miss Sarah and Dorothy Dalton, and seemed happy and contented.

The lawyer gave his sister more money than usual during those first few months after Nat's arrival, and she found it all little enough to buy the things she thought necessary for the boy's comfort and well-being. The old habit of retaining part of the allowance for herself, and purchasing lower-priced food, was still too strong to be broken; but Ambrose Brown found her a very liberal customer in those days.

The townsfolk commented freely on Lawyer Crowe's "charitable deed," and some of them wondered what motive could have actuated him, notwithstanding that Miss Sarah said it was her brother's nature to be kind and charitable.

Early one summer's evening Miss Dorothy Dalton was returning from a cottage away beyond Grange Drayton. She had been visiting a sick woman, and now she intended calling on the minister on her homeward way, to ask his advice concerning this same woman.

Mr. Allgood had grown to be much loved

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and respected by the people of Drayton. He was energetic and plain-spoken enough to suit even Miss Dalton, and the lawyer's sister believed him to be "truly pious, and of gentle speech." He had settled amicably many a disagreement between members of his congregation; he had put down with a strong hand any cheating or untruthful practices which he had discovered among the shopkeepers; and to the bird-stoning, animal-trapping boys of the town he was a terror.

As Dorothy walked on, she wondered whether old Jerry, the pedlar, had gone to London after all. It was many months since she had seen him, and it was usual for him to visit Drayton every two or three months. Then she thought of Harold Drayton, and of the solitary old squire in his splendid home, which she had passed a little while ago.

A low moan attracted her attention suddenly, and caused her to stand still on the road. She looked round, and saw on the opposite side the pedlar lying on a piece of grass close in the shelter of the hedge, his head resting on his open pack. She crossed over, and stood beside him.

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"Jerry! is it indeed you? How came you to such a plight? Cannot you rise?"

"Na, missus; I'm clean done for now. I'm goin' away agin; but not tew Lunnon this time. I'm goin' tew a strange country, sure-ly. He's guided my feet i' tha way o' peace at last."

"Take courage," said Dorothy, hopefully. "I will hasten for help, and have you carried home, and Aunt Keziah will soon cure you."

"Na, na, missus; doan't go yet. I've been tew Lunnon, an' 'twas awful; I couldna rest theer, na ways. I was sore longin' for home agin, an' at last I've laid my head down under tha sky, an' I feel tha sweet air i' my face. I'm dyin', but I'm glad—glad tew hev my feet i' tha way o' peace. I' tha pack theer I've papers a drunken body gev me once, a long while agone, an' I doan't like tew hev 'em throw'd about anyhow. Will you take 'em, Miss Dorothy, an' keep 'em safe? She sed as they was wuth a lot o' siller, but I dunno nowt o' that. I couldna read 'em, as you know, an' m'appen she was on'y talkin' like a drunken body. Anyways, theer they be. You'll find 'em under tha jew'llery. Yes, that's

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tha lot. Take 'em an' keep 'em safe. You can read and find what they's about."

When Dorothy had put the packet away into her pocket, the old man seemed to wander a ittle, and to imagine he was selling his ribbons and his brass and glass jewellery.

"Now, look here! These arena goods tew threap about. You'll busk yourself rarely wi' 'em, my wench. Theer bean't such a lot as this'n any wheer else our side o' the Peak."

Then he appeared to recollect that he was ill, and that Dorothy was standing beside him.

"Doan't go," he entreated feebly, when she would have gone for assistance. "Doan't go yet! Tew guide our feet i' tha way o' peace. I hev been i' tha darkness, an' i' tha shadow o' death; but He allays hears us when we pray, an' He hes guided my feet i' tha way o' peace. Glory be tew tha Fayther, an'——"

Here his voice sank into silence; he was dead. And the birds continued in jubilant strains the interrupted "Gloria."

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CHAPTER XI.

THE POWER OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

WHEN the sun had set on that same evening, a woman, footsore and weary, entered Drayton, and walked slowly along until she came to Lawyer Crowe's house. She stopped at the parlour-window, where the zinc-blind hid the interior from prying eyes. She was a tall woman, and the venetian-blind had not been drawn down to meet the zinc one, so she stared in through the uncovered panes.

She saw Miss Sarah sitting in her arm-chair at the table, a huge bunch of bright-faced flowers before her, and at her side, standing looking at a book, the boy Nat, with a face scarcely less bright than the summer blossoms. The parlour was shabby, and the furniture in as painfully tidy and precise a condition as

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heretofore; but the room had lost its dinginess and its appearance of hopeless poverty. The huge bunch of gaily-coloured, sweet-smelling flowers, and the boy's gravely happy face, must have effected the change. Miss Sarah herself was as solemn as usual, and her attire chosen on as strictly economical principles as formerly; but there was certainly a pleasant smile on her lips, to which they had not always been accustomed.

The woman gazing in at the window took careful note of the changed aspect of things in the lawyer's abode, and she laughed softly as she turned away.

"Ah, ha! I've cheated that clever lawyer after all. He must have spent a lot of money on the *heir of Grange Drayton*," and she uttered the last words with sarcastic emphasis. "I wonder how he has accounted to the townsfolk for the presence of the boy in his house. No doubt he has invented some beautiful story about it, all the while resolving never to let the boy know his true parentage. He has made the *heir* comfortable and happy, I can see, and he has spent money on him without any thought of economy; and Miss Sarah has

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believed her brother's beautiful tale, and done her best, poor soul, to render the life of the dear little orphan a happy one. Well, well, we've had enough of it. But why shouldn't I let everything go on the same as ever? I don't know Dorothy Dalton, and I don't care about Harold Drayton. Why should I put myself out to serve them? They wouldn't do anything for me, if I wanted their aid. Why shouldn't I continue to take the lawyer's money, and leave the boy here with Miss Sarah? Ah! won't our friend James be amazed to see me! He thinks I'm dead and buried this many a month; but, thanks to the cleverness of the hospital doctors, I'm still alive, though that was a bad accident."

She continued on her way, heeding little whether the good folk of Drayton saw and recognised her or not.

Meanwhile, Miss Sarah Crowe, sitting in her parlour, was much troubled and perplexed about a certain thing. So accustomed had she grown to retain a portion of the money her brother gave her for housekeeping purposes, that she had almost ceased to regard her act as a sinful one. The half-truths and the

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deceptions had weighed less heavily on her month by month, until finally she thought no more about them. But within the last year she had gradually become uneasy and uncomfortable under the energetic, outspoken, but, withal, lovingly-worded sermons of Mr. Allgood. He always made such a clear distinction between real Christianity and the imitation of it, that she was no longer able to say with any comfort that she was a thorough follower of Christ, a disciple of whom He would have approved.

No one knew of her sin, and if her brother had not been so secretive and so parsimonious she would not have committed it; but she felt now that those arguments in her favour availed her nothing. It was *her* sin, and for it she would be punished, And, indeed, had she not already been punished by the contraction of her whole nature, the death of all generous impulses within her, and by the growth of covetousness, deceitfulness, and many another evil weed?

These had been the effects of that sin. Would she now give it up, and escape from under its baleful yoke?

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Her brother was a good man in all else but his undue love of money, she reasoned within herself, and why should she be uncomfortable because of *one* dark spot in her character? Ah! perhaps an undue love of money was no *sin*, whereas telling half-truths undoubtedly was.

There would be the monthly prayer-meeting for women as usual to-night. Ought she to go and confess that she was not what she appeared to be, and ask for the prayers of the little assembly? She had publicly deceived them, and they were her intimate friends; they would help her, no doubt. Ah! but it was a difficult task which she had set to herself!

"Are you going out, Aunt Sarah?" asked Nat, an hour later, when Miss Crowe appeared in the parlour dressed for walking.

"Yes, dear; I am going to prayer-meeting. Will you come?"

It cost her a great effort to ask the boy to be a witness of her humiliation.

"No, I want to finish my story. May I stay?"

"Of course, if you would rather do so."

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Then she passed out to the street, and took her way to the hillside chapel. Mr. Allgood presided as usual over the meeting, and Miss Dalton sat with her niece in a front seat.

"Oh! dear, dear! why did Miss Keziah come to-night, of all nights?" murmured the lawyer's sister, as she sank down on a back form and bent her head in her hands. The minister generally asked the congregation before the first prayer if they wished that any especial request should be offered up, or if they had any especial cause for thanksgiving. To-night he put the customary question, and one and another of the women rose up and answered him.

Trembling in every limb, and with eyes that were tear-filled, Miss Crowe rose in her back seat, and said, in a low but distinct voice: "I have deceived you all for many years past. You all thought me a real Christian, and I almost thought so myself; but I have known now for some months that I have been deluding myself. I have been guilty of practising a deception upon a near relative for many years, and I have told half-truths in order to continue it undetected. From this

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night forward, I give it up, and I ask you all to forgive me, as I have already asked God, and as I shall ask my brother. Will you pray for me that I may be kept in the straight path?"

She sank down again upon her seat, and a suppressed sob here and there showed that she had the sympathy of her hearers.

"We will thank God for you, Miss Sarah," said Mr. Allgood heartily; "and seeing that He has forgiven you, we have nothing to do but express our affection for you, and our gladness that you have had strength so to speak and act."

With a simultaneous movement, the little assembly of women rose up and crowded round Miss Sarah, and shook her warmly by the hand. Then they returned to their seats, and the minister prayed.

Just before the conclusion of the meeting, Mistress Keziah Dalton stood up, to the intense astonishment of the congregation, and spoke.

"No doubt you all wonder what I am going to say, and no doubt you were all rather astonished when you saw me enter the prayer-

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meeting to-night. I do not often attend it, and I came to-night chiefly because my niece asked me to do so. But now I am glad I came, for I have made a decision since Miss Crowe spoke to us. The religion that can strengthen a woman to utter the confession Miss Crowe uttered a while ago, is the religion I would like to profess openly. I know Christians in this town whose Christianity I thoroughly respect and desire to imitate, and I have been wanting for a long time past to acknowledge publicly, in all humility, the fact that my sins have been forgiven me, and that I wish to be a servant of Christ in earnest. But I have been putting off this public confession; I make it to-night in all sincerity, and I thank Miss Crowe for the help she has given me."

Tears were in the hard, keen eyes of Mistress Keziah when she had concluded, and her voice trembled.

The minister was overjoyed at welcoming such a new member, and Miss Crowe's hand was one of the first held out in congratulation.

"Oh! Aunt Keziah, what a meeting we had to-night!" said Dorothy, as she neared her

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pretty, flower-surrounded home. "Poor Miss Sarah! How glad I am that she is all right now. I think the coming of that little boy has made her happier, too. And you, dear aunt, you are at last an open Christian. I have often thought that you were one in secret, and that you would not make a profession, in case you should not be a perfect one."

"I cannot say that was exactly my thought, but I have always disliked the idea of being a doubtful sort of good person, like Miss Crowe. Now I know better, and I know that it was my conceit and pride that kept me back so long. I am very happy for having spoken out at last, and I think Miss Sarah is far above me, and I thank her sincerely."

When Dorothy opened the garden gate, she started back in astonishment.

"What is it, Dorothy? Let me see. How disgusting! A drunken woman, my dear; and she has her head on my pet flower-bed. Look at the black bottle appearing out of the front of her dress. How are we to get her away? Pah! her dress is dirty and mud-stained, and she has blood on her face."

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"I don't think she is drunk now. She may have been, but I think she has fainted from weakness. She looks very ill. Will you help me to carry her into the kitchen? We might restore her to consciousness. She is not a mere tramp, for her dress is good, though soiled."

"Why, Dorothy, you are foolish. Carry a creature like that into my clean kitchen! No, then, indeed I won't. I will go for help, and have her taken into town, as I suppose we cannot leave her on the road all night."

"Aunt, wait. Please, for my sake, let us carry her in and try to restore her. She may die while we are waiting."

Suddenly it dawned upon Mistress Keziah that she was speaking and acting in a hard, uncharitable, unchristianlike manner. Only a short time ago she had expressed her determination to be a follower of Christ, and now she was refusing aid to a destitute, perhaps a dying, fellow-creature.

"Dorothy, I am ashamed of myself. Let me lift her up. I am strong enough to bear nearly all her weight. You take her feet—

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there now, that is right. Where shall we place her?"

A temporary couch of shawls and rugs was constructed on the floor by the two women, and the unconscious stranger laid upon it. She remained in a stupid condition until the following morning, when she opened her eyes and looked steadily at her nurses. She stared silently for a minute; then she said:

"Why didn't you leave me outside on the road? I am not worth so much trouble. You are Drayton folk, I suppose, but I don't seem to know you. Might I ask your names? I am not accustomed to be treated so kindly, and you can't want payment, for you look too respectable."

"I am Dorothy Dalton, and this is my aunt. We found you in our front garden last night and we thought you very ill."

"Are you indeed Dorothy Dalton?" spoke the woman, in slow, wondering tones. "And you have taken me, a stranger, and an apparently drunken one, too, into your house like this! Well, you are good women, both of you. I am often drunk, but I am not so now; and I fell down from starvation. I had been

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drinking; but I have eaten nothing for a couple of days past, and I am not so strong as I used to be. I wish I could reward you for your good deed last night, but I am afraid that through my own folly I cannot do so. I know who you are, Dorothy Dalton, and I know all about Harold Drayton. I am Matilda Drayton, Harold's sister-in-law, and at the instigation of Lawyer Crowe I stole my own child Ulric from his grandfather. The child was to have been the heir; but the lawyer disliked Harold Drayton, and wanted Grange Drayton for himself. I cared for no one so long as I had money enough for my own use, and that the lawyer gave me continually and at regular intervals. Shortly after I took Ulric he died, and was buried, and I had all the papers that proved his birth, his death, and his burial. I knew that if James Crowe was aware of the child's death, he would try to avoid paying me my income; so I took the orphan boy of a sister in America, and called him my child. You will say I am a most unnatural mother, and so I am, very likely; but I never loved anything in this world except myself. There are

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such people; you need not look incredulous. You and Harold Drayton have suffered a long time on account of that false charge, and I think I would like to help you, if only to annoy James Crowe. Besides, you have shown me true sisterly charity, which no one ever did before. In a drunken folly one day, I gave all the papers which could prove my words and the innocence of Harold Drayton to an old pedlar on the road outside your house here. Of course I shall never see them again; and that is a long while ago now."

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CHAPTER XII.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

WHEN Dorothy heard those words, she suddenly remembered the papers which Jerry the pedlar had so recently left in her charge. Could it be possible that they were the papers Mrs. Drayton had given to the pedlar in her drunken folly? Quitting the kitchen, the girl went to her desk in her bedroom, and took from it the packet which Jerry had warned her to keep safely. She had received it from the old man simply to please him, never imagining for an instant that the papers were of any real value ; but now, perhaps, they were the very documents needed to establish the innocence of Harold Drayton.

Carrying them with her, she returned to

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the kitchen and gave them to the woman, who was sitting up in a chair, taking some necessary food.

"My papers! The same papers I gave to the pedlar! How did you get them? Were you aware that they contained proofs of Harold Drayton's innocence?"

Then Dorothy explained all that she knew of them, and Mrs. Drayton was greatly excited and delighted.

"I will go now and make you and your Harold happy without further delay, and before I repent of my good nature. I am not long of the same opinion on any subject, and I might want to make away with those papers to-morrow, and leave everything as it was before."

"You could not do so," said Mistress Keziah, sternly; "for we have heard your confession and have seen the papers."

"Much use that would be to you if you had no *written* confession from me, or no papers to prove your words. I could deny that I ever said anything to you about myself or Lawyer Crowe. But we are wasting time and words. I will go to Lawyer Crowe, and

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your aunt can accompany me, Dorothy, whilst you telegraph to Harold Drayton to come here without delay. Won't it be a pleasure to see the lawyer's face when I tell him how I have deceived him!"

She seemed to think chiefly of the pleasure it would be to witness the lawyer's downfall, rather than of the happiness she was about to give to Harold Drayton and Dorothy. The girl shrank involuntarily from her, and hastened away to do her bidding.

Mistress Keziah and her strange companion entered West Street, and knocked at the door of Lawyer Crowe's house. Miss Sarah herself answered the summons, and glanced in some surprise at Mistress Keziah's companion.

"Is the lawyer at home?" asked Miss Dalton, after the usual greeting.

"No, he is at Grange Drayton. Won't you come in?"

"No, thank you; not to-day, Miss Sarah," and Mistress Keziah could not help speaking in that pitying tone.

Alas! that poor sister had no idea of the sorrow that awaited her; had no idea of the disgrace that, like a hideous monster, was

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even then pursuing her loved and much respected brother. Would the blow overwhelm her quite? Miss Dalton felt at that moment a strong desire to spare the lawyer for her sake, but that such a course would be now wrong and utterly impossible. A year ago she would have triumphed over the fall of this man, but a gentler spirit had entered into her, and she felt nothing but pity for him and sorrow that he could ever have been tempted to act in such a wicked manner.

Justice must be done, and two long-suffering, pain-tried hearts be made happy at last; but if the truth could be made known without exposing Lawyer Crowe's name to odium, Dorothy and Harold would be also well pleased, no doubt. They had been patient and charitable all along, and that poor sister might yet be spared.

Mistress Keziah glanced at the hard, triumphant face of Mrs. Drayton, as she turned away from the house in West Street, and she felt instinctively that it would be useless to ask her to forego that triumph.

"Let us go on to Grange Drayton without delay, and leave word for your niece to follow

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us, if she likes. Harold Drayton cannot be here for some hours."

So the lawyer's business at Grange Drayton was to be again interrupted by Mistress Dalton, but in a very different fashion from that other interruption.

Meanwhile, Miss Sarah returned to her parlour, and wondered over the strange manner of Miss Dalton.

"She appeared as if she was sorry for me, but I have no trouble or care now, I am so happy since my confession has been made. I must tell James about it this evening; there was no opportunity last night. He will be very angry, no doubt, and will perhaps find it hard to forgive me at first, but I shall deserve that. When he has recovered from his anger, I must ask him to let me refurnish this sitting-room; it will be more cheerful for me and for the boy. I wish I could have just such a parlour as Miss Dorothy Dalton has."

While Miss Sarah thus meditated, Mrs. Drayton and Mistress Keziah had arrived before the great outside gate of Grange Drayton.

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"We must knock for admittance here, and very likely the servant will refuse to allow us to enter."

"He will not refuse to allow me to enter," said Mrs. Drayton, calmly. "I am not afraid of that."

A gardener, who had been hired for the day, opened the gate.

"We will go up to the house," spoke Mrs. Drayton to the man. "There would be no use in asking you if Lawyer Crowe is here."

"He is here, ma'am; but you can go on, and Simmons'll answer you."

The hall door was open, so the two women walked in and mounted the stairs to Squire Drayton's parlour.

The old man was sitting, as usual, in his arm-chair, propped up with pillows, and standing before him, talking earnestly, was the lawyer.

"Good day to you, squire. You did not expect to see me here again." The shrill tones of Mrs. Drayton startled both men, and caused them to look round. The lawyer grew pale even to his lips, and sank upon a chair without

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uttering a word. "Why are you so frightened, James Crowe? How do you know I have come to betray you? I may be only making a friendly call on my father-in-law. So you have been kind enough to feed and clothe the *heir* all this while. What a pity the boy is not my son Ulric, after all, but only the orphan child of my dead sister. It was really most charitable of you to take him in, when you thought I was comfortably dead and buried."

"What is the meaning of this talk?" demanded the old squire, in angry, surprised tones. "What brought you back from America, Matilda Drayton, and what do you want here now?"

"I came back because I spent all the money you gave me and wanted more. Lawyer Crowe supplied me, on condition that I would steal my child and keep him away for ever. You see, the lawyer knew your disposition, and he wanted Grange Drayton for himself. You drove away your innocent son, Harold, at his instigation, and you have almost made him master here; and, for all I know, may have signed a will leaving him everything. Now,

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you have not been fair in your dealings, for a Drayton should have Grange Drayton, and you had no positive proof of your son's guilt. Well, as I said, I stole Ulric from you, —though whether a mother could be said to steal her own child is open to question; but he died and was buried in the north of Scotland, a year after I had taken him. Then I got my dead sister's little boy, and called him my child, in order to deceive the lawyer. He never asked to see the boy, but used to pay me regularly enough. Sometimes the money didn't last very well, and then I demanded more, and we had rows. I always hated James Crowe for his mean, cunning ways, and his untruthful tongue. He used to try and tell lies to me, but I detected him. I have the papers here, regularly signed and witnessed, to prove all I have said. Harold Drayton has been telegraphed for, so you can do justice to him without much delay. I am afraid it is not a love for justice that actuates me now, but my hatred of James Crowe. I don't intend to lose by this business; the only loser will be the lawyer. I shall persuade Harold Drayton to make me an allowance

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out of the property, as the widow of the eldest son."

"Is all this true?" demanded the squire, turning to the shrinking lawyer.

"Yes."

"What a coward the man is!" said the mocking, accusing voice again. "He is not an enemy worth fighting. He makes no resistance."

"Why did you deceive me so?" continued the old man, without noticing the interruption. "I have always been your friend, and I always paid you well. And what had Harold done to you, that you should have injured him so? You knew my hasty, passionate disposition, as this woman says, and you used that knowledge for your own purposes. Go away, and never let me see you again. I cannot say more to you, for I am almost as much to blame as you."

The lawyer rose up and staggered out of the room, uttering no word, and keeping his eyes fixed on the ground. When he reached his home, he called his sister to him, and bade her, in angry, loud tones, pack up her clothes and his own, and to be ready to leave Drayton

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in an hour. She was amazed and frightened, and prepared tremblingly to do his bidding.

"Leave the boy and his things alone. He is to stay in the house."

"But, brother,——" began Miss Sarah, tearfully.

"No 'buts' to me. I say the boy is to be left here, and I mean it."

She turned away, and was about to quit the parlour, when a heavy groan caused her to retrace her steps quickly. She saw her brother lying on the floor in a fainting condition. In terror, she sent Nat for the doctor, who lived close at hand.

That night James Crowe lay dead upon his bed. The doctors said it was heart-disease, and that some great excitement must have caused such a fatal attack.

In a short time the townsfolk knew all the story which Mrs. Drayton had to relate, and they knew that Harold Drayton had been welcomed home by the old squire, and made heir to Grange Drayton. The new will provided that Matilda Drayton, widow of the eldest son, should have a pension out of the estate, on condition that she returned to

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America and never revisited England; and if she broke her promise she was to forfeit her income.

The boy Nat begged so hard to be allowed to remain with Miss Crowe, and Miss Crowe desired so earnestly to adopt him, that it was so arranged; for he had no father or mother, and his aunt was very glad to get rid of him. Miss Sarah was now a rich woman, for all her brother's wealth, and it was much, belonged to her. She gave up the dingy home in West Street, and bought a pretty little country house near Grange Drayton, and there took up her abode with the happy, contented Nat.

For many a day she refused to believe in the truth of the charges brought by Matilda Drayton against her brother. Indeed, she never quite believed them; and her friends did not try to convince her of the truth. By degrees, the worn, faded look left her face, and she appeared, what she really was, a happy woman. Her house was very pretty and very comfortable, and she dreamed there many a wonderful dream about the future of her boy Nat. She was a constant and accept-

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able customer in Ambrose Brown's shop and he and all the town spoke well of her.

Miss Dalton would not leave her pretty, flower-surrounded house, when Dorothy wanted her to promise to live at Grange Drayton. She had always loved her house she said, and Dorothy and Harold might come and see her as often as they liked, and she would visit them, but she would not live with them.

In the fair, bright weather of the spring, when the virgin gold of the daffodils was cast broadcast everywhere, just one year after Squire Drayton's death, Dorothy and Harold were married. All the townsfolk went to look at the wedding, and Miss Dalton's pretty little home was crowded with guests. Every one rejoiced sincerely in the joy of the newly-married pair.

"They deserve their happiness," said the people, "for they have been patient and long-suffering, and charitable to the man who worked them such ill."

When the feasting and talking were over Harold and Dorothy wended their way together to the beautiful home which was

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29. No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matthew vi. 24.
30. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke xv. 7. 10.
31. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.—Psalm xxxiv. 6.
32. The path of the just is as the shining light.—Proverbs iv. 18.
33. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.—Proverbs iv. 23.
34. While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.—2 Chronicles xxxiv. 3.
35. Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.—Luke xviii. 16.
36. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.—Daniel i. 8.
37. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke xviii. 14.
38. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke xix. 10.
39. Walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt.—Daniel iii. 25.
40. Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.—John xiii. 8.
41. The integrity of the upright shall guide them.—Proverbs xi. 3.
42. Because he believed in his God.—Daniel vi. 23.
43. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—John xxi. 17.
44. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.—Psalm cxxvii. 1.
45. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John i. 29.
46. And the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand.—Esther v. 2.
47. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?—Psalm xxvii. 1.
48. Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.—1 Peter ii. 24.
49. The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him.—Ezra viii. 22.
50. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.—Luke xxiv. 31.
51. And they said, Let us rise up and build.—Nehemiah ii. 18.
52. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.—Luke ii. 10.
53. For the joy of the Lord is your strength.—Nehemiah viii. 10.

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"God is love."
"God sent forth His Son."
"Goodwill towards men."
"Holy, Holy, Holy."
"I am the True Vine."
"I am the Bread of Life."
"King of Kings."
"Lord of Lords."
"Looking unto Jesus."
"Purify your hearts by faith."
"Remember now Thy Creator"
"Rejoice in the Lord."
"On earth peace."
"Stand perfect in the will of God."
"Stablish your hearts in holiness."
"Suffer little children to come unto Me."
"The Lord will provide."
"Thou shalt call His name Jesus."
"The Lord giveth wisdom."
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"I am the Light of the World."
"I am the True Vine."
"Come unto Me . . I will give you rest."
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"Emmanuel—God with us."
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"God is Love."
"God sent forth His Son."
"I am the True Vine."
"I am the Bread of Life."
"Looking unto Jesus."
"The Lord giveth Wisdom."
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"Looking unto Jesus."
"Learn to do well."
"Pray without ceasing."
"Rejoice in the Lord."
"Search the Scriptures."
"The Prince of Peace."
"Thou God seest me."
"Thy will be done."
"Watch and pray."
"I am the True Vine."
"King of Kings."
"Lord of Lords."

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"I will give thee a crown of life."
"Jesus is the Son of God."
"Lay hold of eternal life."
"My house is the house of prayer."
"Put on the whole armour of God."
"Quit you like men."
"Remember now thy Creator."
"Remember the Sabbath Day."
"Speak not evil of one another."
"Stand fast in the faith."
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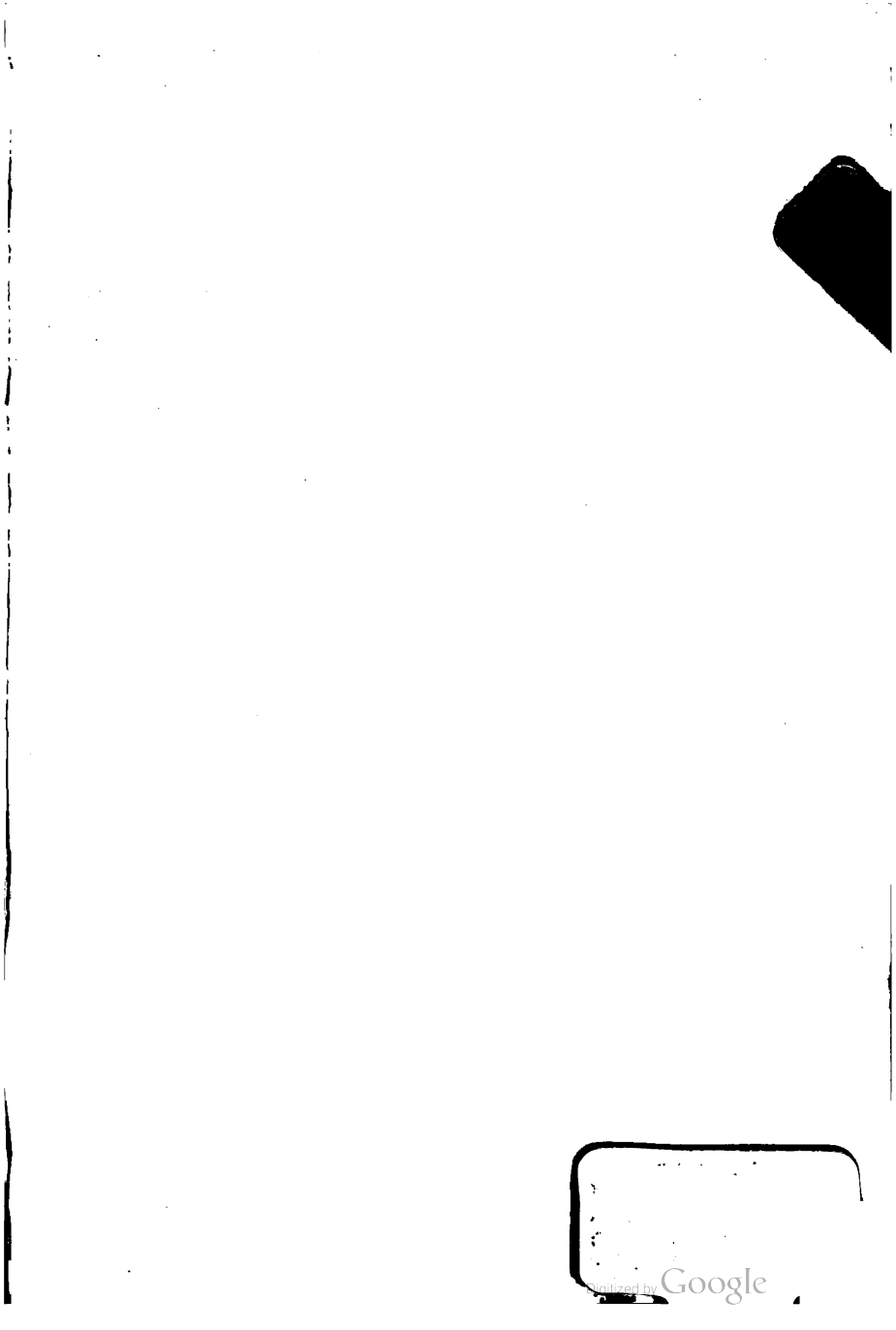
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